

A Garden of Roses

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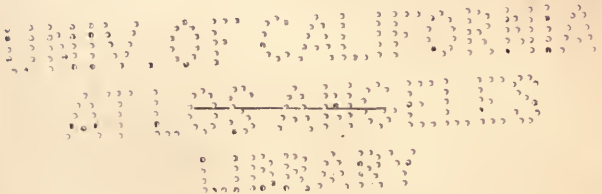


GARDEN OF ROSES.

Stories and Sketches.

BY

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN.



BOSTON:

THOMAS B. NOONAN & CO.

17, 19 AND 21 BOYLSTON ST.

1887.

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597 WASHINGTON ST.

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CONTENTS.

A GARDEN OF ROSES	5
THE SECRET OF THE OLD VIOLIN	43
FLOATING ON A BOARD	72
JUNE ROSES	81
A PASSION FLOWER	89
BLUFF'S BOY	95
A SPRIG OF SHAMROCK	106
A GOOD EXAMPLE	116
A CHRISTMAS HYMN	131
A JUNE DAY	137
WILDE BY NAME AND WILD BY NATURE	144
THE BOY WHO WANTED TO BE OLD	152
THE LAST MEETING OF THE T. I. AND B. B. E.'s	155
A DAY AT RIDGEWOOD	161
GRACE COURT	163
WHAT THEY FOUND IN THE COUNTRY	182
BIANCA	205
A VACATION TALK	221
A TALK IN THE FALL	227
HE WANTED TO BE A CURIOSITY	233
A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE	251
AT SCHOOL AGAIN	261
IN POVERTY HOLLOW	266





A GARDEN OF ROSES.

I.

IT was a rainy day—a rainy day in the country. The roads were as soft as quicksands, and the air so misty that the tops of the oaks not far from the house seemed to be blotted entirely from the landscape. Outside, there was a pleasant-looking house, with a broad and wide lawn edged by an old-fashioned border of boxwood. Inside, a large parlor, warmed by a grate fire; the curtains of the windows were drawn, to keep out the gray light, and a softly tinted lamp stood on the centre table, supplying the place of the exiled daylight.

Three girls were the occupants of the parlor. One—Margaret—had thrown down her book, and was lounging on a comfortable sofa, her

arms stretched above her head in a yawning attitude. She was not over sixteen, with a straight nose, long-lashed eyelids, and a pale complexion. Her face would have been attractive if it were not for a settled expression of discontent. She seemed to be dreaming.

Not far from her, on a low stool, with a piece of embroidery held listlessly in her hands, was another girl, nearly a year younger than Margaret. She was almost blonde, while Margaret was almost brunette; they each represented extremes of that common type which is neither blonde nor brunette. She, too, seemed to be dreaming; and her dreams apparently were not very pleasant, if one might judge by the expression of her face.

A third girl, still younger, sat in front of a cabinet-piano, striking a few notes of a waltz, a march, or a galop; now starting off into a series of brilliant movements with her right hand, and then suddenly making the bass rumble like the echo of a departing thunder-storm in the mountains. She was evidently restless.

Margaret, Anna, and Rosalie Wyckoff were sisters. Their father had been dead four years. He died suddenly, cut down in the midst of

his work, leaving his business affairs very greatly confused. His wife, with her three daughters, had moved to the only property of his they found unencumbered. It was in the country, one hundred miles from any town. The girls found it dull, after the bustle of the city. Unhappily, their life in the city had made them older than their real age. It had been a gay life. Little time had been given to thought or study, but much to social calling, entertainments, and the gossip of society, in which even young girls unfortunately become too often adepts.

Their mother was devoted to them. No matter how ill or weary she might be, she would hasten to save them from the necessity of doing anything that she could do. They accepted the service as a matter of course. Their father had never been very rich. A certain economy had always been necessary in his household; when, in the winter, the question of new gowns and wraps recurred, it was understood, of course, that the girls were to have the most costly articles of that kind; while their mother was contented to take what was left after they had gotten what they fancied they needed.

They had seal-skin sacks and diamond earrings; while their mother, still young, and certainly more interesting in every way than her daughters, wore cheap garments. But nobody seemed to be struck by the strangeness of this arrangement. It was not singular in their set; it was the rule for mothers to take the second place even before their daughters assumed long gowns.

Mrs. Wyckoff waited on her children assiduously — sometimes with a sigh, as she reflected how helpless they were! She never thought for a moment that they were lacking in duty or respect. They were only helpless in her eyes, nothing more.

Since they had come into the country, Mrs. Wyckoff was obliged to exert herself more than ever. The servants the Wyckoffs had employed in the city had been discharged, and the rougher domestic work was done by a Swedish woman, whose manner of doing things was often very different from Mrs. Wyckoff's.

The girls read, embroidered, played, or idled as before. They had more time on their hands now. Their city occupations were missing. Mrs. Wyckoff's limited income pre-

vented her from keeping a horse and carriage. Anna and Rosalie grumbled privately at this. They said that they could not see why their mother would not save in some other way. A pony carriage would have helped them to enjoy themselves so much, and it really cost very little to keep a horse in the country.

Margaret, more sensible, replied that this "very little" was lacking. Anna and Rosalie did not believe it; it was "just one of mamma's queer ways," they said.

II.

And yet they were affectionate in their way. Rosalie would languidly turn her head from the music rack as her mother went out into the back garden to help the servant take down the clothes from the line, and wonder why "mamma does not rest herself a little." It did not occur to her to offer to help her mother. Margaret sometimes offered to read a new book — Mrs. Wyckoff often stinted in a hundred small ways, in order that her children should have new books and magazines — but

the mother had no time to listen. This made Margaret somewhat impatient.

“No time!” she murmured; “mother is too busy — too restless; she will wear herself out.”

And she was wearing herself out in seeing that the dinners and teas were served as daintily as possible, and that her daughters were kept away from the petty trials of life.

Anna had a taste for Art, with a capital *A*. She painted golden rods and asters, and numberless other fashionable flowers on plates; she embroidered long strips of cloth with sun-flowers, and hung them everywhere in the house. She left the business of making her gowns to her mother. She was a little over fourteen years of age, and girls of fourteen are not generally expected to be very useful. But, as Anna could embroider nicely, it seemed as if she might sew quite as nicely, with a little practice. Her Uncle John once said this. Anna had never liked him since; she was sure he had no feeling for Art.

No attempt had been made to educate the girls properly. They had had various governesses; but, although Mrs. Wyckoff had always insisted upon taking them to the Episcopal

church every Sunday, they had never been instructed in the duties of their state in life.

They had heard a great deal about "high aspirations," "the duties of girlhood and womanhood to the world," and "the necessity of the broadest culture;" but of the practical daily duties of Christians they knew nothing. Mrs. Wyckoff saw that something was wrong; she trembled for the future of her darlings; but she had not the courage to tell them that they were living in a fool's paradise, they were such dainty, fragile creatures!

And so they continued to do what their favorite preacher had called making "life beautiful." He had not intended to say to them that they should neglect useful things for those that were only ornamental; but he had preached to pews filled with rich people and the Wyckoffs had apparently been rich.

Margaret looked around the room, which ought to have been cheerful, but which was not cheerful. There was the warm, bright grate fire; there was the soft lamp-light; there were all sorts of pretty objects in the room—music, autumn flowers, books. And yet the atmosphere was not that of a contented household. The girl threw down her novel and

yawned; then she went to the window and looked out on the sodden lawn and the damp masses of newly-fallen leaves.

“I have finished that novel at last!” she said.

“How many have you read this week, Madge?”

“Let me see: ten, Anna — ten at least.”

“And I am sure you do not know the names of the characters in any of them.”

“You are wrong, my dear. I can not remember the names of the other nine just now, but the tenth was ‘Lady Adelaide’s Secret.’ There is a duke in it, and a great deal about hunting and English life. Dear me! I wish I lived in England! They have such lovely times! What with five-o’clock teas and hunting parties and luncheons, they enjoy life. The English know how to live in the country.”

“So should we if we were rich.”

“I wish we were rich! I am tired of being poor—I am tired of everything. I wish I had another novel!”

“I don’t see how you can reconcile this novel-reading to your conscience,” said Rosalie, somewhat sharply. “It ruins the memory, and makes one discontented.”

“*I* don’t see, Rose, how *you* can reconcile your eternal practicing of pieces of music, which you never finish, to *your* conscience. You waste as much time as I do, and you are quite as discontented. You know that you said the other day you would rather live in a garret in the city than in a palace here.”

“I did not, Madge. I—”

“Girls! girls!” said a soft voice; and Mrs. Wyckoff’s gentle face, flushed and weary-looking, appeared at the door. “Do not quarrel, my dears.”

“Rose is only talking nonsense, mother,—we’re not quarrelling. Is the skirt of my black gown done yet, mamma? You said I might have it to-day.”

“Well, Madge,” began Mrs. Wyckoff, apologetically, “I have not had time to touch it. Hannah was busy with the washing, and I had to hunt for eggs in the barn for the dessert, you know; and there are so many little things of which you girls know nothing. Dear, dear! I am tired!”

“We’re all tired, mamma. I wish I had something to do!”

“There are some towels that want hemming, Madge,” said Mrs. Wyckoff, with a sigh.

“Oh, I can’t sew, mamma! I mean I wish I had something to do worthy of myself and my aspirations.”

“A girl of sixteen with ‘aspirations!’” exclaimed Mrs. Wyckoff, with an amused look. “At your age I was only a child.”

“Times have changed, mamma,” answered Margaret, with an air of conceit that would have tempted a less fond and foolish mother to the severest possible reprimand.

“I had determined,” Margaret continued, “to help you in my own way, mamma. I wrote a poem.”

Margaret paused, evidently expecting that this announcement would be received with astonishment and awe.

“Oh, that’s what you were scribbling about in your room for so many mornings, was it?” asked Rosalie.

“I sent it to five editors. It was rejected by them all.”

“What a shame!” cried Anna. “I am sure you can write. Look at those Goodale sisters, whose names appear in all the magazines. They’re not much older than we are.”

“If you don’t mind, mamma, I’ll read it to you now?”

“Thank you, Madge,” said Mrs. Wyckoff, beaming with pride; “but just wait till I run down and see if the kettle is boiling.”

“Oh, the sordid cares of life!” said Margaret, tragically.

III.

Mrs. Wyckoff was absent longer than she had intended. The girls heard a carriage stop at the door, and the sound of footsteps on the gravel walk. Then the bell rang. Margaret went to the window, but she could see only a piece of a woman's gown through the rails of the porch.

The bell rang again.

“Who can it be?” asked Rosalie. “Hannah is so busy to-day, why doesn't mamma open the door?”

An interval of silence; then sounds of greeting, a pleasant laugh, and light footsteps in the hall.

“Why, girls,” cried Mrs. Wyckoff, opening the parlor door, “it's Philomena!”

Philomena was a trim little figure dressed in

brown; she had thrown off her wraps. Her cheeks were red from the sharp air outside. She smiled cheerily, and kissed Margaret on both cheeks. She had never met the other girls before; she shook hands with them. Her brown hair was smoothly arranged; her neatness of head-dress was in great contrast to the Wyckoff's, whose heads were in various conditions of dishevelment. The only ornament she wore was a gold medal of the Blessed Virgin which hung below her close collar.

"How comfortable you are!" she exclaimed, cheerily. "This is really like a home. But I've interrupted you," she continued, noticing the paper in Margaret's hand.

"Madge was about to read a poem," said Anna, with an air of subdued pride.

Margaret cleared her throat.

"Do go on with it, please," said Philomena.

"Would you mind getting me a glass of water, mamma?" asked Margaret.

Mrs. Wyckoff rose from her chair as a matter of course. Philomena looked from her to the girls in amazement. She stood up for an instant, and then sat down again. A moment before she had felt in her heart a kindly warmth towards her cousins. It died out

suddenly. She looked at the pretty adornments of the room with changed eyes. The "home feeling" had gone out of it.

Mrs. Wyckoff brought the glass of water. Margaret sipped it, and began in a clear, sweet voice :

"I would that my life were a garden of roses,
With a new bud open to light each day.
(O roses of June-time! *your* life discloses
Fresh perfume, fresh beauty in summer's way.)

"I would make my life a garden of roses,
But keep the thorns for myself alone.
(O rose of the June-time your heart encloses
Sweet thoughts for us, though fair June has flown.)

"I would that my life were like hidden roses,
Known by its sweetness,—to fade away
Gently, gently as rose life closes,—
To live for others, and then decay."

Mrs. Wyckoff wiped her eyes. "It's very sweet, dear Madge!"

Margaret looked at her cousin for approval. Philomena repeated, rather coldly :

"It's very sweet." She thought, remembering the episode of the glass of water, "She does not mean it."

"Life offers us so few opportunities of making a garden of roses!" sighed Margaret.

Philomena laughed. She could not help it. She had never seen a girl of sixteen assume such a lackadaisical air.

“The Sisters at the convent told us that every hour offers us some opportunity of living for others,” said Philomena. “I want to tell you, Aunt Wyckoff, why I have come, and to ask a favor.”

“After tea, dear,” said Mrs. Wyckoff, coming back to earth. “I haven’t any time, dear. I must get tea myself. Hannah wants to milk the cow. After tea, dear.”

Margaret went back to the window. Rosalie and Anna drew Philomena into a corner, and began to chat.

“I never saw such girls!” said Philomena to herself. “Don’t they see that their mother is working and worrying herself to death?”

“What did you think of my poem?” said Margaret, turning suddenly. “It was the crystallization of the thought of a lifetime.”

Philomena laughed. “Pardon me, Cousin Madge, but I am sure you did not mean it.”

The girl turned away with an air of offended genius.

“It is very pretty,” said Philomena, apologetically, in answer to Anna’s wrathful glance;

“but it lacks sincerity. I’ll tell you what I mean later.”

It was plain to Mrs. Wyckoff, at the tea table, which was very daintily arranged, that Philomena had made a bad impression on the girls.

She loved Philomena, who was her dead sister’s only child. She and Margaret had visited this sister when Philomena was much younger, and Mrs. Wyckoff cherished fondly the remembrance of that last precious visit to her sister.

“Am I to stay?” Philomena asked, helping her aunt to some cake, and smiling.

“Of course,” said Mrs. Wyckoff. “You are very welcome. I see from your father’s letter that he wants you to stay until he comes from Europe. I am afraid you will not like us as well as the Nuns at the convent.”

“I will try to,” said Philomena, with a wistful sigh. “Ah, the dear Sisters! You know I have lived with them ever since dear mother died. But I may give you some trouble?”

“It’s just as easy to work for four as for three,” said Mrs. Wyckoff. “And Margaret thought, ‘the payment for board will help mamma.’”

“But I will help you!” cried Philomena; only let me stay!” And then she quoted, rather mischievously:

“I would make my life a garden of roses,
But keep the thorns for myself alone.”

IV.

Philomena found the first three days of her visit very wearisome. She arose early to find Mrs. Wyckoff hard at work in the kitchen or dairy. The young ladies did not usually come down stairs until after nine o'clock. Philomena enjoyed her morning walk to Mass. The road ran by the lake and through well-kept vegetable gardens. She came back with bright eyes and rosy cheeks. Her cousins came languidly down without animation or appetite.

After breakfast, the girls left the table as it was, and went to their favorite lounging place, the parlor. Margaret took up her novel, or tried to evolve another poem from her inner consciousness; Rosalie “improvised,” as she called it: which meant playing snatches of nearly

every composition she had ever seen or heard ; and Anna put in or picked out embroidery stitches.

Philomena found the mornings spent in this manner very tiresome. The autumn air was crisp and refreshing, the scent of the pines delightful. She saw Mrs. Wyckoff digging potatoes in the back garden. She longed to help the poor lady, who seemed, as usual, weary and worn out. Her impulse was to snatch the big sunbonnet from her aunt's head, and go to work with a will. She liked the occupations of her cousins much better than manual work ; but she saw how cruel, how unnatural it was that the mother should drudge day after day, while the children took their ease. The parlor could never be pleasant to her as things were. A thousand times would she prefer to dig potatoes in the rain, to trudge through the mud for the eggs that the hens hid so carefully, to help the careless Hannah in all her menial work, rather than to see her aunt wearing herself away. The good Sisters, to whom Philomena had been committed early in life, had taught her that the most menial work done at the call of duty, for our Lord's sake, became noble and worthy. She had not learned in vain the life of the

Blessed Virgin. She had been made to ponder over the *Magnificat*. Hannah's work, in all its petty details, was beautiful in the light of the Queen-Mother's smile.

How could these girls fail to see the sin of leaving their mother, sick and weak, to face all the rough little trials of life? Philomena asked herself this question over and over again. She wanted to help her aunt, but she dared not offer to do it yet. It would look like the casting of a reproach on her cousins. Hannah, who had long been complaining that the frills and flounces and fancies of the young ladies gave her too much to do, left the third day after Philomena came. Then she had said to her aunt :

"I will go, too ; I know that I shall be a burden to you."

Mrs. Wyckoff looked hopelessly at the confusion of the kitchen and dining-room — Hannah had gone suddenly.

"What did you say, dear?"

"I had better return to the convent. The Sisters have little room now, but I know that they will keep me until father comes back. Perhaps they could make me useful in some way."

“No,” said Mrs. Wyckoff, eagerly. “You must stay. I love to have you, dear; besides, I don’t know how I could make both ends meet, if it were not for the money you will pay for your board.”

Philomena was surprised. The house was so luxurious, the girls so idle, books, musical pieces so plenty, that this confession of poverty seemed strange. Philomena returned to the parlor, to find her cousins occupied as usual. Rosalie had set Margaret’s poem to music; she was singing as Philomena entered:

“I would that my life were like hidden roses,
Known by its sweetness,—to fade away
Gently, gently as rose-life closes,—
To live for others, and then decay!”

Philomena felt an impulse of anger. She was inclined to speak her mind to these people, so well satisfied with themselves, but so discontented with their lot in life. She restrained herself, murmuring her usual little prayer; for Philomena had temptations to impatience; she liked to burst into anger once in awhile. She said with a smile:

“Why, Madge, you have put your mother’s life into poetry!”

“Mamma’s life is anything but a poem; it is all prose,” said Margaret, loftily. “I wish I could gain riches and fame by my talent; I would make her life a poem of infinite splendor—full of those gold and crimson harmonies of colors that one finds in the old cathedral windows of your churches over the sea.”

“Have you ever seen one?” asked Philomena.

“No,” answered Margaret, coloring. “No; not exactly. I have seen them in my dream-life.”

“Oh!” Philomena said.

“What is your specialty, Cousin Philomena?” Anna asked. “Do you ever embroider?”

“Oh, yes; in the afternoon. We have to do all our serious work in the morning, you know. At the convent, embroidery was a kind of play.”

Rosalie and Anna looked at each other, and said with their eyes, “No feeling for art!”

“I have heard,” Margaret said, laying down her novel, and taking her favorite yawning attitude, “that convent girls get only a smattering of things—acquire only a superficial idea of the world’s great possibilities.”

Margaret was paying her cousin back for her late frank question.

“We do not learn to talk as you talk, Cousin Madge; we are taught that the highest aspiration a woman can have is to love and serve God in the state of life in which He has placed her. I don’t know much about education myself; but I do know, without being able to make comparisons of the different systems, that the Sisters keep young girls good and pure. We are not taught to appear older than we are. But, Madge,” she added, blushing, “you must not take me as an example. I wish you could know some of our girls! *They* do credit to the Sisters.”

“I should think you’d put your whole soul into your embroidery, if you did it at all,” said Anna, putting an unnatural eye into a peacock’s feather.

“Soul?” asked Philomena, in surprise.

“Certainly,” said Anna, with an ape-like air of affectation, and in a parrot-like voice.

Philomena made no reply. This was a new language. What she had done, she had done simply and well, without talking much about it. Indeed, the girls at the convent had preferred to be quiet on embroidery afternoons, because French conversation was then the rule.

“Do you find,” asked Margaret, who had in

the meantime dipped into her novel again, "that your religion colors your life? In mine, religion has always been somewhat of a thing apart."

Philomena raised her head in surprise.

"I am a Catholic, Cousin Madge. Father said when he sent me to the convent that he wanted me to be a Catholic—I was a little girl then—because Catholics remembered God every hour of their life, and prayed daily to be remembered by His Mother at the hour of their death. Why, Madge, religion is our life."

Philomena, who was reserved on matters near her heart, left the room to hide her emotion. She came back in a few minutes, bringing a roll of velvet in her hand.

"This is part of a curtain for the decorating of the repository on Holy Thursday."

Anna uttered an exclamation of astonishment and admiration as the ruby velvet, embroidered with gorgeous arabesques of gold, was unrolled.

"Did you do *that*?" she asked.

"Yes."

Margaret and Rosalie gazed at the intricate pattern with admiration, and Anna said:

"Do teach me that stitch, Cousin Philomena!"

“ With pleasure.”

After this the girls treated Philomena with some consideration; and when she played the overture to *Semiramide* without a mistake (Rosalie always slurred over parts of this great “ show ” piece, by improvising the bass part), Margaret offered her some caramels. Even Margaret, superior as she was, had her weaknesses.

One afternoon the three girls went out to gather autumn leaves. Philomena could give a good reason for staying at home. As soon as her cousins were out of sight, Philomena ran into the kitchen. She found her aunt almost reduced to desperation by the amount of work that had accumulated since Hannah’s withdrawal from the domestic scene.

Mrs. Wyckoff brightened up at the sight of her niece.

“ Now, you sit down in that rocking chair, aunt; I’m going to have a ‘ good work.’ ”

She pushed Mrs. Wyckoff into the old-fashioned rocker, and, putting on a big apron, went to work. Difficulties disappeared before her willing and skilful hands.

Mrs. Wyckoff protested. “ You’ll spoil your hands,” she said.

“My hands are no better than yours, aunt,” retorted Philomena. “Can’t I work as well as Hannah? And I am going to make cake for tea. My cake took a prize at the convent.”

Mrs. Wyckoff at length accepted the situation. She leaned back in her chair, and gradually went to sleep. The tired look faded from her face, and she appeared serene and placid, as Philomena remembered her in other days.

Tears rose to the girl’s eyes. She stooped and kissed her aunt on the forehead. Mrs. Wyckoff awoke at the slight touch. She caught Philomena’s hand in hers.

“I wish, dear,” she said, as if half ashamed, “I wish you would try to teach my girls to be more helpful—for their own sakes. They do not like the work of every-day life.”

“I do not *like* it, aunt,” said Philomena, a little embarrassed; “but I have been taught to hold it a sin if I neglected even the most unpleasant duties of my state in life. If I were not a Catholic, aunt, I should never do rough work, or keep my temper, or do anything I did not want to do. I am naturally a very idle, impatient girl; I am indeed.”

Mrs. Wyckoff smiled. She watched Philo-

mena as she made her cake and put it into the oven. The bell rang. Mrs. Wyckoff jumped up.

“No, no!” said Philomena; “you keep still, aunt, and watch the cake.”

The girl threw aside her white apron, and ran to the door. In about twenty minutes she came back.

“Oh, aunt,” she cried, “it was Mrs. d’Eresby, who lives at Redlands. The Mother Superior sent her a note saying that I was one of her children, and that Mrs. d’Eresby ought to be nice to me; so she—Mrs. d’Eresby—drove over to ask us to go with her on Sunday to the consecration of a new Catholic church twenty miles across the country. She wants you and one of the girls and me to go with her. Will you go into the parlor and say yes for us all?”

“I can’t go in: my hair is all in a tangle; but you may excuse me, and say yes.”

Philomena ran off.

“Aunt means to decline in favor of one of the girls, but I will not let her,” said Philomena to herself, as she saw Mrs. d’Eresby to the door.

V.

Margaret, Rosalie and Anna returned from their walk, laden with bundles of richly tinted leaves. At once they set to work to make tasteful decorations of them.

Margaret was in great good humor. They had met Mrs. Treverne, a neighbor, who was supposed to be a person of literary taste. Margaret had read her poem very effectively, and Mrs. Treverne had offered to have it printed for her in the Redlands *Daily Eagle*.

Philomena, sure that Mrs. Wyckoff's hardest work was done, volunteered to assist her cousins in their dainty tasks, on condition that she might have some wonderfully red maple leaves for the little shrine of the Blessed Virgin in her room.

Margaret smiled at this request in a superior manner, that made her seem thirty-two instead of sixteen.

"I hold, with Matthew Arnold, that the truest effect of religion is lucidity," she said, making a cross of maple and beech leaves. "To be lucid is to be religious."

“Then why are you not lucid?” demanded Philomena, losing patience.

“Am I not—in my life? Our friend, Mrs. Treverne, says that my life is as lucid a life as that of any girl she knows.”

“Your words are not. I wonder if you know what they mean? I don’t.”

Rosalie and Anna turned at their cousin with reproachful eyes. After all, no matter what they might think of her sayings, Margaret was *the* genius of the family, and she ought to be respected accordingly — by strangers.

“I don’t wish to be rude,” continued Philomena, coloring slightly, and keeping her eyes on the leaves in her hand; “but I do hate silly bits taken from novels and given out as if they were Gospel!”

Margaret shrugged her shoulders. “When you have more acquaintance with cultured people you will be less of a Philister. The quotation I made the other day was from ‘Ouida’; it was only an echo of George Eliot —”

“‘Ouida’!” cried Philomena; “a girl of sixteen talking of ‘Ouida’! I’d be ashamed to do it. The Sisters put her books on the condemned list. The truth is, Cousin Mar-

garet, if you read fewer silly books, and helped your mother more, you would—”

Here Philomena remembered her tendency to impatience, and paused. “I beg pardon!” she said.

“Mother does not want us to help her,” Anna answered.

“She needs your help, nevertheless. By the way,” Philomena continued, very glad to change the subject, “Mrs. d’Eresby called this afternoon.

“Mrs. d’Eresby!”

This lady was the most eminent inhabitant of that part of the country. To be called on by her was an honor. Every locality has its eminent inhabitants; it is to be hoped that they are all as courteous, humble and truthful as Mrs. d’Eresby, whose late conversion to the Church had given the whole neighborhood a shock.

Margaret at once concluded that *her* fame must have brought about this unexpected event. Perhaps Mrs. d’Eresby had heard of her poem in some accidental way.

Philomena explained. “And she has three vacant places in her carriage for next Sunday morning. There will be a grand consecration

ceremony at Compton. An Archbishop will be there, and the music will be grand."

"I hope mamma will have time to fix up my black silk," said Margaret. "I am sorry Mrs. d'Eresby could not have seats for all of us. I am dying to make her acquaintance. She gives the loveliest garden parties!"

Philomena was taken aback by this cool method of crowding out Mrs. Wyckoff.

"Your mother has not been out for a drive for many weeks. She does not have time to go to her church on Sundays."

"She does not mind," answered Margaret, carelessly. "She would rather see us enjoy ourselves."

"But Mrs. d'Eresby did not invite 'us,'" said Philomena, her impatience rising again. "She asked particularly for my aunt, and begged me to invite her and Rosalie, because I said Rosalie was the musical one."

Margaret smiled. "You do not know mamma, my dear. She will not go. She is a dear little mother, but she could no more hold her own in conversation with a '*grande dame*' like Mrs. d'Eresby than—well—than you could. She will not go."

"Then nobody will go from this house."

Philomena uttered this speech, and turned her face towards the window, her color rising.

“Come, Rose,” said Margaret, loftily; “let us try my poem as a duo.”

“I would that my life were a garden of roses,
With a new bud open to light each day—”

“What mockery!” thought Philomena. She went up to her room and cried. She knelt a moment before her statue and said an act of contrition. “When shall I learn patience?” she asked herself.

The tea-bell rang. Philomena looked at her face in the glass, and then turned in disgust to wipe the tear-stains away—

“You’re a nice teacher—you are! You want to improve other people, and you cannot even keep your temper!”

Before Philomena had reached the tea-table it was settled that Margaret should go with Mrs. d’Eresby, instead of her mother.

“I will make my excuses to Mrs. d’Eresby when she comes, Philomena; and honestly, dear, I have nothing to wear.”

Philomena’s cheeks burned. After a while she raised her eyes from her plate. She had a struggle, and she conquered, saying to her-

self, out of the "Following of Christ:" "And they who freely and willingly serve Me, shall receive grace for grace."

"Margaret," she said, her voice trembling a little, "if you will give me your black silk gown to-night I am sure I can make it like the one Mrs. d'Eresby wore the other day."

Margaret was delighted. "Mother is somewhat old-fashioned in her ways, you know."

That evening Rosalie seemed rather thoughtful. "There is something in Philomena's religion that is noble," she said to Anna.

"But Margaret says she is not lucid."

"Bosh! You know that Margaret has heard that word somewhere. She does not know what it means. Philomena's religion seems real. It makes her give up things. She is hard at work at Margaret's dress now. I saw her saying her beads this morning, and I felt that she was really speaking to God. Now, Anna, you know we always seem to be praying at God. Don't you think we might help mamma to wash the tea-things?"

"She does not want us to spoil our hands."

"I am going to help her, anyhow."

Anna looked after her sister in amazement.

Mrs. Wyckoff had a little time to sit on the

porch and watch the sunset that evening. Rosalie's offer to help her had lightened her heart.

VI.

So far as Margaret was concerned, the drive with Mrs. d'Eresby was a failure. She was surprised to find that the lady seemed to prefer her mother's company to hers. Mrs. d'Eresby accepted Mrs. Wyckoff's excuses reluctantly, but civilly took her substitute. Mrs. Wyckoff seemed quite at home with her visitor, and her visitor, to Philomena's great joy, was delighted with her.

"You have a very charming mother," Mrs. d'Eresby said, as the carriage drove off. "I hope that you young ladies may grow up like her."

Margaret was not prepared for this. The idea of the elegant Mrs. d'Eresby offering poor, prosaic mamma as a model!

Margaret monopolized Mrs. d'Eresby, while Philomena and Rosalie chatted,—the former trying to explain to her cousin the details of the

august ceremony of the consecration of a church.

Mrs. d'Eresby was very courteous. Margaret repeated her poem, and waited for applause.

“ ‘I would make my life a garden of roses,
And keep the thorns for myself alone,’ ”

quoted Mrs. d'Eresby, with a significant look. “ Beautiful — if it is lived up to. I wonder if your mother feels it a thorn to lose her drive to-day? I suppose not; mothers are used to sacrifices.”

Rosalie heard this and blushed. Margaret was proof against it. She made some of her best quotations and talked about human aspirations and altruism.

“ My dear,” said Mrs. d'Eresby, gently, “ I am an old woman, and I have seen a great deal of the world, but I do not understand what you mean, and I should feel sorry if I thought *you* did. If we remain for Vespers, you will hear the choir sing the *Magnificat*. It is worth more to a woman, young or old, than all your new literary lights. — See, Philomena! There is a late wild rose by that fence. Here, Fred-

erick," she said to her coachman, "get that rose for me."

She broke off the briars, and gave it to Philomena, saying, with a smile, "I will 'keep the thorns for myself alone.'"

But Margaret was not conciliated by this quotation. She did not speak during the rest of the drive.

Rosalie eagerly drank in the grand music and solemn ceremonies. They fulfilled her idea of what worship ought to be.

Margaret prepared to be very critical about the sermon, but she forgot her intention before it was over. There was no rhetoric, no "lucidity." It was a plain sermon on the everyday duties of life. It made Margaret feel uncomfortable. She wished that she had not come.

Rosalie listened tremblingly to the priest, who spoke with no doubting voice. When the sermon was over, she drew a long breath. Philomena sat next to her.

"Cousin," she whispered, "I have been very blind. I see that we do best when we do not look abroad for imaginary duties, but do those nearest us."

Philomena clasped her cousin's hand in reply.

Mrs. Wyckoff had worried herself almost sick in getting a tea ready worthy of the excursionists. But Mrs. d'Eresby graciously declined, leaving an invitation for them all to her next *musicale*, which, as she explained, was a quiet gathering.

During the following week Philomena and Rosalie saved Mrs. Wyckoff a great many steps. Rosalie became so cheerful that she even wondered at herself. Philomena was delighted to satisfy Rosalie's curiosity regarding the doctrines of the Church, awakened by the ceremony of the consecration.

"Would you like me to become a Catholic, mamma?" Rosalie asked one afternoon, when the three were merrily engaged in the kitchen.

"Very much, dear, if it would make you like Philomena here. Do you know," her mother said seriously, "I believe I would become a Catholic myself, if I had time to think! But I never have time," she added, with a sigh.

"Rose and I will give you time now," Philomena said, kissing her aunt's worn hand.

Margaret and Anna varied their life in the parlor with frequent visits to their friend Mrs. Treverne. It was a week from the night of Mrs. d'Eresby's *musicale*. She sent over to

invite Philomena and Rosalie to spend a few days with her. Mrs. Treverne, who sympathized with Margaret's "aspirations," consoled her by ridiculing Mrs. d'Eresby's bad taste in inviting Philomena and Rosalie.

Philomena refused to go at first, but Mrs. Wyckoff begged her so vehemently not to disappoint Mrs. d'Eresby, and not to deprive Rosalie of the pleasure of the visit, that she consented at last.

Margaret was resolved that she should make a good appearance at the *musicale*. It was to be a very quiet assemblage, or else Mrs. d'Eresby would not have asked girls so young as to have no right in general society. Margaret kept her mother very busy rearranging old laces and stuffs. Mrs. Wyckoff planned, sewed, and ironed late into the night. Anna's dress was a secondary consideration; but it, too, required attention and time. Margaret was very particular, she found fault incessantly.

Mrs. Wyckoff had tacked up a little picture of the Blessed Virgin Philomena had given her. It was on the wall over the ironing-board. Underneath it were the words, "*O Sainte Mère, priez pour moi!*" Her eyes rested

on it often, and she repeated the words "If I only had time to think!" Now she had less time than usual. No servant to replace Hannah had been found. The Indian summer, with its hectic heat, had come.

The day before the *musical* was hotter than usual. Mrs. Wyckoff, standing at the ironing-board, felt her head reel. "Oh, that Philomena or Rosalie were home!" As if in the distance, she could hear Margaret singing,

"Gently, gently as rose-life closes, —
To live for others and then decay."

It was so hot! She could dimly see Philomena's little picture. "*O Sainte Mère*—" she began. She sank to the floor, dropping the smoothing-iron from her hand.

Anna heard the fall, and ran down stairs. Margaret's song was interrupted by her shriek. Their mother's work was over.

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In the dim parlor Mrs. Wyckoff lay peaceful and white in her coffin, her breast covered with late roses; among them was Philomena's little picture. Only Philomena and her cousins were there; she rose from her knees to draw back

a curtain that she might see that dear, wan face in the light once more.

“Cousin,” cried Margaret, suddenly throwing herself at Philomena’s feet, “teach me the truth,—help me to repair my awful wrong. *Oh, if I could only bring her back!*”

Philomena’s tears fell fast on her cousin’s head. She could make no answer to that heart-broken cry, so often repeated too late all the world over.

Margaret rose and tottered to her mother’s side. Her eyes, in the burst of light that Philomena had let in, saw the words on the little lace-edged picture of Our Lady. She read them in a low voice, and Philomena ended the prayer she had begun—“Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us now and at the hour of our death.”

And her cousin answered with her, “Amen,” and felt a nameless consolation.





THE SECRET OF THE OLD VIOLIN.

I. — “THE LITTLE OLD MAID.”

THE old violin was silent. The E string hung loose, and the bow beside it on the wall showed strands of waving horse-hair. The hands of its master had brought forth the last strains he should ever draw out of his beloved instrument, in the *Gloria*, at the Grand Mass, on Easter Sunday.

May had come; Easter Sunday was past three weeks, and Mary Hackett, in her black gown, sat looking at the old violin with tears in her eyes. On the evening of the Resurrection Day, her father had died, and the kind priest had said to her: “You are all alone my child, but the Blessed Mother and the angels are the nearer to you for that.”

Every morning at Mass and the May devotions — each previous year she had knelt next

to her father—Mary watched the dear old priest, and found comfort in his words. She was all alone,

Her father had made her life a very simple one. Since her mother's death, which had happened on the voyage from Ireland four years ago, Mary had known no companion but her father. Dear, dear old father. The thought of the swelling veins in those kind hands which had toiled so long for her made her choke; the remembrance of the dim blue eyes looking through their glasses at the scores of the music she so carefully copied, caused her heart to ache; she threw herself, heart-broken, before the old violin. It was part of him; it had been his one friend.

“Oh, father, father! if I could only have repaid you a little—just a little!—before you died.”

She had done her best. She had kept the three rooms in the lodging-house, in Brooklyn, as neat as wax. She had studied to make her dear father comfortable. His coffee in the morning was always just right; and when he came home from the rehearsal at theatre, weary and worn, Mary's little dinner was perfection. It was generally a very frugal

little dinner; but Mary thought a great deal about it, and generally contrived to introduce some surprise every day.

“Sure, Mary, you’re a *cordon bleu*,” the old man often said, growing cheerful as the appetizing aroma met him at the door.

Mary never knew what a *cordon bleu* meant; but knowing that it was a compliment to her cookery, she was content.

Yes, she had done her best. How neat was her father’s worn satin tie, how carefully brushed his glossy black suit, how scrupulously bright all his belongings! His “parts” in the orchestra—he played fourth violin—were wonders of legibility. Not a grace-note or the smallest dot could be taken for anything else. She had them all now in her scrap-book—hundreds of them. How she had watched over him! Yes, she had done her best, but it was all too little!

Mary was fifteen years old, more serious than girls of her age are. Her need of looking after her father, who was old and delicate, had made her thoughtful and grave.

She was not a pretty girl. She was rather short in stature, with dark-blue eyes, brown hair, a turned-up nose, and a sprinkling of

freckles all over her healthy face. She hated the freckles.

“Never mind, Mary,” her father had said, with a bow copied from the gallants of the stage, “freckles are grace-notes in the symphony of beauty.”

And Mary wrote this sentiment in her notebook, and thought it was very fine.

The happy, peaceful days were gone! Of what use were the lesson-books now, their was no one to hear her repeat their words! Alone! — all alone! There were people passing in the street, children playing, and the German woman on the floor above was calling out, “Wilhel-meena! You, Wilhel-meena!”

Mary felt a great desire to talk to somebody, to know this Wilhelmina. She had never felt so when her father was alive. The neighbors had dropped in after her father’s death; the women, rough and ready, tried hard to be gentle, and the men expressed kind feeling too. But, as there had been no “wake,” the neighborhood had come to the conclusion that Mary and her father were “stuck up,” and had troubled her no more. They called her the “little, old maid.”

She was grateful, but she was very shy,

Now she took up the old copy of the "Imitation," and read :

" ' So often as I have been in the company of men,' said a philosopher, ' I have become less of a man : ' thus it is with those who talk much."

" It is best to be quiet," she thought. And she went into the " extension," filled with geraniums, tall lilies, and hyacinths. These her father had tended with all the success that comes to those who love flowers. The " extension " was a veranda, covered and faced with glass. In the old days when the house was the residence of one family, instead of half a dozen, it had been a conservatory on a small scale. Mary's father, an industrious collector of bulbs and plants, had restored it to its original use. He indulged in no luxury, except these flowers.

One by one he had added to his collection. The thermometer and the oil-stove it contained had been purchased at sacrifices. He had walked from the theatre several months, to save enough to buy them.

Mary looked at the thermometer and then at the flowers.

" Fifty-five degrees for the roses. It has been a cold night. This *bon silène* rose that

ought to have bloomed for Easter, is just out. What a bank of white hyacinths? Oh, I wish father could see them ! ”

The Japanese rose was full of buds. There was no bud on the Chinese primroses. “ It will soon be time to set the roses out of doors,” she thought.

But there was no “ out of doors.” The yard was filled with boxes, barrels, old bottles, and a venerable deposit of clam-shells, planted to give beauty to the place. Mary sighed.

“ Well, I can soon open the windows, and let in the air and the sunshine. How pretty our rooms are ! I wish father — ”

The shoemaker in the front room, whose constant tapping had annoyed him, was gone at last. Everything was quiet as he liked it ; but he, too, was gone ! Before he died, he had said to her :

“ I have little to leave you, dear ; but, knowing how feeble the poor father was, you won’t blame him for that, dear. There’s my violin, and there’s something in that which you may value, dear, because my father gave it to me. I slipped it in yesterday. It will make you happy — ” Here he gasped, and he could only add : “ The rent’s paid for six

months. Sure it was the only investment I could make for you, darling. You won't be turned out before you can look around, as we were in the old country. God bless you!"

Mary had been thankful many times since for her father's forethought. She shared with him the horror of being "turned out." She had, after all the expenses of the funeral were paid, fifty dollars and a home. How she treasured that receipt for the rent! Whither could she have gone? What would have become of the big shelf of books, the little one filled with MSS. of music, the flowers? It would have been like another death to have sold and scattered them; yet in a large city space is so valuable that the poor child, with her limited means, could have found no room for her treasures.

But now — what to do?

The doctor had brought her a newspaper, with a long column of "wants;" and an unknown woman had called, bringing with her a tract, "Advice to the Criminal," and asked her to call at the "Evangelical Society for Obtaining Employment for Females."

"You are a Romanist," I see, said the visitor, noticing the crucifix and the picture of the Sacred Heart.

Mary was puzzled. "A Catholic —"

"Oh, yes," said Mary, "of course."

"Do you know, child, that you are in the bonds of iniquity."

"No, ma'am," said Mary, timidly.

"Well, you are," answered the visitor, decidedly. "Read these tracts." And the woman gave her several leaflets, "Why Romanists Hate the Bible;" "The Degradation of the Irish due to Romanism," and "How Romanish Worshippers Pay to have their Sins Forgiven."

Mary's cheeks flushed under the freckles.

"These are not true, ma'am. My father was a Catholic."

"Poor man! poor man!" said the visitor, feelingly. "He sees the light now."

"He sees the light in Heaven," cried Mary, tearing the tracts and stamping her foot. "Don't you come here again!"

"Poor Popish, unguided girl!" All the bugles, jet, and beads on the zealous woman's wraps jingled as she raised her hands in horror. "I must say you keep your rooms very neat — much neater than most of the Romanists in this house. Ah, what a lovely calla-lily!"

"That said Mary, her face still flushed, "is for the altar of Our Blessed Lady."

“Idolatry! Idolatry! Let not your angry passions rise, my child; but we can’t expect much from the Papists; they do not control themselves.”

Mary felt sorry for her anger. The woman would think that Catholics were really not taught to forgive injuries. She cut a bunch of red carnations, and gave them to her visitor.

“Forgive me, madam; I was hasty. Had I remembered the example of Our Blessed Lady, I should not have stamped my foot.”

“Well, I never!” said the visitor, leaving. “But come to the Evangelical Home on Wednesday, unfortunate girl, and the Rev. Melancthon Bangs will pray with you and get you some work to do.”

Mary did not go. But it was the only opportunity of gaining employment that offered itself. She could play the violin, she could sew, she could cook. But how could she start to earn her living by these acquirements?

Several of her father’s companions in the orchestra came once to see her. She played the “Fox Hunter’s Jig.” They stopped their ears, and said:

“Ach Himmel, that is no moosic.”

She was discouraged. But she played every day an exercise and one of Moore’s melodies in

memory of her father. She played very badly, and she knew it; so she had nothing to depend on, except her cooking and sewing.

The world seemed very bleak, cold, and wide. She shivered, and looked into the old violin again and again; she could not see that her father had left anything for her within it.

Where should she ask for work? She knew nothing of the two great cities. She had walked to Mass through the same streets day after day, and sometimes gone with her father to Prospect Park. She had only once or twice crossed the Ferry to the glittering, noisy, wonderful great city beyond the river.

She knelt for a few minutes, not before the violin this time, but in prayer before her little statue, embowered in hyacinths, of the Blessed Mother—the comforter of the afflicted—the solace of the lonely.

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There was a crash upstairs, louder than usual. Mary started up and listened. Sounds of crying—a child's voice—and loud lamentations by a woman. Then a knock at Mary's door. She opened it.

“Come, come,” said a little girl, “the baby is killed!”

II. — HOW A QUESTION WAS ANSWERED BY A QUESTION.

It was Wilhelmina Schmid who spoke. Her flaxen hair, arranged in short pig-tails, seemed to stand upright from fright. She stood in the door-way, big tears making tracks over a face that showed marks of recent occupation in the making of mud pies. The Schmid, six and the baby, were always in the street, and always in the mud. Often had Mary longed to wash them.

“Come,” said the child.

Now Mary did not like the Schmid. The mother had a loud voice, and sometimes the noise of the children made the house unpleasant. They cooked strange compounds of cabbage, the odors of which, mingling with the garlic of the Italians in the fourth story, often caused her to wish they lived somewhere else. Their mother was often out. She was a washer-woman, a widow.

“I have enough to attend to myself,” thought Mary, “without taking other people’s troubles on my shoulders. What am I to do? I am more miserable than anybody. There’s always

something the matter with that nasty Schmid baby."

But the little Wilhelmina uttered another howl, and pulled at her gown.

"I suppose I *must* go, though I shall not have time to—"

Another cry from above; Wilhelmina danced with fright, and pulled Mary's gown again.

Mary followed the little girl up the dark stairway and into the close, ill-smelling rooms of the Schmid.

It was Sunday morning. August Schmid, a boy of fifteen, was replacing the table which had been overturned; Katrina, his sister, next in years, was picking up the coffee-pot and some slices of bread that were scattered on the floor.

Florestan, Alphonsus, and Adelaide—all Schmid—were gathered around Filomena, the baby, who, in her mother's arms, was crying in a way that showed her lungs were uninjured.

"*Ah, fraulein,*" cried Mrs. Schmid, whose fat face was pale from fright, "I am so glad. Tell me that the baby—my little Filomena—is not dying. Ach, see the blood!"

The child was bleeding. There was a cut

on the head. The poor mother was almost too weak to stand. She sank into a chair, and Mary caught the baby.

Mary, used to a quiet life, hated trouble; but the sight of the mother's grief and the little baby made her forget herself and her sorrow.

In a minute she had discovered that the cut on the baby's forehead was really slight.

Forgetting the risks that might attend the entrance of these wild Schmidts into her rooms, she cried out :

“ Go, one of you, and get the court-plaster which is in my work-basket ! ”

Florestan, Katrina, Alphonsus, Adelaide, and Wilhelmina darted down stairs at once, all eager to enter the mysterious region belonging to the “ little old maid,” a region in which they had never been permitted to penetrate.

But they returned in a few minutes, with a noise like that of a troop of shodden young colts.

“ Das court-plaster,” they demanded, “ was ist das ? ”

Luckily Mary had found the packet of plaster in her apron pocket.

In her absorption, she did not notice that Wilhelmina carried the flower of the superb

calla, which she poked at the baby's nose, saying, in German :

“ It will make thee well, thou angel.”

Mrs. Schmid watched Mary, her fat, red hands clasped over her heart, as Mary skilfully plastered the baby's wound, and washed its face. It was a pretty baby, after all, when its face was clean and its hair combed. It had big, blue eyes, which, with tears in them, reminded Mary of heliotropes after a June shower.

Filomena, after a time, put her chubby arms around Mary's neck and went to sleep.

“ Ach, sie sind so lieblich ! ” murmured Mrs. Schmid. “ Never will I call you ‘ little old maid ’ again ! ”

This brought Mary back to herself. To tell the truth, her chief reason for disliking the Schmids was that the children had acquired a habit of singing out, whenever they could without falling into her hands, “ little old maid ! ” She had never confessed this to herself. She was ashamed of it.

“ I must go and get ready for Mass,” she said. “ It is nearly eight o'clock.”

“ I wish I could go,” Mrs. Schmid said ; “ but I never do, except at Christmas. I cannot get the children ready and go, too.”

Mary looked at her, shocked and horrified. A Catholic who never went to Mass.

“Can’t the children mind one another while you are out?”

“Mind one another!” cried Mrs. Schmid,—
“Wilhelmina, I will whip thee well when the *fraulein* goes; steal not thy sister’s bread. Florestan, thou shalt have no dinner, if thou dost not cease to stand on thy head. Wilhelmeena, thou wilt waken the baby!” cried the poor woman. “You see,” she continued, speaking in English, “how they mind one another. I went out to the grocer’s for a minute, and behold Wilhelmina pulled over the table upon my all-beloved Filomena!”

“It was thou, August!” cried Wilhelmina, shrilly.

August, a big, flaxen-haired boy, with a sulky expression, said nothing; he, however, shook his fist at his sister.

“Does August go to Mass?” Mary asked.

“Not of late,” said his mother hesitatingly. “He has no work, and his clothes are torn. Let me mend thy sleeve for thee, August.”

August reddened, and tried hard to bury his sleeves in his sides.

“I will not,” he said, sulkily. “You only

made them worse, mother. I will not go to church and be laughed at by the other boys. The last patch you put on —”

August reddened still more at the remembrance of the mortification of that patch.

“It is true,” said Mrs. Schmid, turning to Mary. “I cannot sew. My fingers are too clumsy and stiff, and August likes not to the boys to call him ‘Dutchie.’ It is hard to be good when one is poor.”

Mary felt that she ought to deny this, but she did not know how. August’s elbows, in spite of his efforts to hide them, showed for themselves. His coat was very ragged about the sleeves.

Having received the thanks of Mrs. Schmid, Mary went down stairs. The people in the house were early risers. It still wanted a quarter of an hour of eight o’clock.

As she put on her modest hat, she reflected on the troubles of the Schmid. She did not want to. She wanted to think of her own great trouble; she wanted to get back from Mass, and then to shut herself up, and brood over her sorrow. But the spectacle of August, so ragged that he could not go to Mass, haunted her.

Suddenly she took off her gloves and her wrap.

“I can go to the nine, ten, or eleven o’clock Mass,” she said. “I will not be selfish. I prayed for work this morning. Here is some at my hand. It is hard for the poor to go to Mass when they have so much to do. I have nothing to do. I ought to help them.”

From a drawer, wherein many things were neatly laid, she took some pieces of black cloth. Then providing herself with her needle, thread, and thimble, she knocked at the Schmids’ door.

August looked as sulky as usual. The woman who had called on Mary with the tracts was seated in the centre of the room, with the Schmids grouped around her.

“Oh, come,” she was saying; “come to the little Bethel; then you will listen to the holy words of the Scriptures, which your poor Popish ears have never heard!”

Mary said, “Good-morning, ma’am.” And then to Mrs. Schmid, “I am in a great hurry. May I mend August’s sleeves, Mrs. Schmid?”

August’s face became radiant. He whipped off his coat, and passed it to Mary. Out of regard for the ladies, he then wrapped the worn, old table-cloth around him and retired to the remotest corner.

“Would you desecrate the Sabbath, girl?” demanded the woman of the tracts, as Mary deftly cut the cloth she had brought. “Stop at once; you are committing sin. Is this what your priests teach you?”

Mary paused, surprised. Her cheeks flushed slightly.

“It is a good work — a work of necessity. August has need of his jacket to-day. Our priests teach us, ma’am that Sunday is the Day of the Resurrection, not the Jewish Sabbath. Please, Mrs. Schmid, may I take the coat down stairs? I’ll be back in a few minutes.”

Before the woman of the tracts could continue her denunciations, Mary was gone.

August went to Mass at nine o’clock. He forgot to look sulky; he grinned with pleasure. Had he not a new black necktie and a pair of cuffs which Mary had found for him? and was not his coat neatly mended? August felt that he must behave himself well. And at the catechism class in the afternoon he received a picture of St. Filomena, as a reward of merit.

Mary, her appetite for self-sacrifice increasing with practice, volunteered to take care of the baby and Wilhelmina, while their mother ran over to the church with the rest of the brood.

Her first impulse, when she was alone with the children, was to wash them. But, as there was but little time and she intended to go to eleven o'clock Mass herself, she denied herself that pleasure, and told them stories.

The German children asked for one of Grimm's Märchen, which their mother had often told them, but Mary, considering that the lives of the saints were more appropriate, entranced them with the story of St. Gudula. She was just telling how the evil spirits tried to blow out the saint's lantern every time she went to Mass early in the morning, and how they tried to make her afraid in the darkness, when Mrs. Schmid came back, releasing her.

How quiet and peaceful Mary's room seemed when she returned from Mass!

The scent of the white and purple hyacinth came through the shut glass doors into the sitting-room, hinting of the richness and sweetness of the coming summer. The ivy against the walls of the "extension" quivered in time to the trilling of the canary, which seemed to be singing the last words "the little old maid" had listened to—

"Dona nobis pacem—pacem!"

All was very peaceful. Her work of the

morning had lifted the burden of her grief; and for a time she ceased to ask herself, "What can I do?"

A knock at the door. Mary dropped her book. It was Wilhelmina, the little pig-tails tied with red ribbon, and with marks of much rubbing on her shining face.

Mrs. Schmid asked the *fraulein* to dinner.

The little old maid shuddered. Dinner with Filomena, Florestan, Adelaida, Alphonsus, and the terrible Wilhelmina! But Mrs. Schmid meant to be kind, and Mary, with a regretful look at her room, went up to accept her kindness.

The Schmid kitchen was very hot and greasy. Mrs. Schmid was ladling out soup from a steaming kettle into the plates of the children, who were grouped around the deal table.

Wilhelmina showed a tendency to dip her fingers into Adelaida's plate, and Florestan and August had one or two slight misunderstandings. Mary saw that Mrs. Schmid's knowledge of cooking led to some waste. She asked permission to make dessert, which she did, to the amazement of everybody, from some apples, sugar, and milk.

The spray of white hyacinths with which she

had deftly adorned the table was generally admired.

“ Ah,” said August, “ if I had that, I could sell it for twenty-five cents.”

“ Mother,” cried Alphonsus, “ I wish Flor-estan and I could sell flowers at the Ferry, instead of the *Telegrams* and *News*. Why don’t you sell *your* flowers, little old maid?”

“ Alphonsus!” cried Mrs. Schmid. “ The boy is crazy!”

“ *You* call her ‘little old maid,’” said the flaxen-haired Alphonsus, apologetically.

“ Never mind,” she said, smiling. She was thinking of the boy’s question.

The Schmid family did not long remain embarrassed. The mother had told her brood that Mary was a poor orphan, and the children had showed their sympathy by fishing out the moist pieces of dough from their soup and laying them on her plate. She was glad when dinner was over.

In spite of herself, she became interested in the thoughtless Alphonsus, whose flaxen hair curled in every direction, in the mischievous Wilhelmina, and even in the sulky August.

But August was her obedient servant; he said “ hush ” very loud whenever his brothers or sisters interrupted her, or she told of the

little house in the old country, and of her father and mother.

“I must be up at four o’clock,” said the washerwoman. “I must do much before I go out to wash. It is hard to be poor.” She looked very contented, though. “I wish August had something to do; the others bring so little in.”

Mary had been thinking, not of herself, but of these others. Alphonsus’ remark about the hyacinth had started her thoughts.

“Mrs. Schmid,” she said, after a pause, “I will get breakfast for these children to-morrow and help them off to school, if you will let August sell some of my flowers.”

“Ach, wunderschön!” exclaimed Mrs. Schmid, kissing Mary on both cheeks; “you are an angel!”

“How good is the little old maid!” chorused the children.

And then August said, “hush!”

“Only,” continued Mary, “till he gets something else to do.”

“It is well, it is well,” said the mother; “even a few pennies would help us.”

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Mary fed the children on oatmeal and milk,

and begged Mrs. Schmid to keep the greasy sausages she had bought until later. The children were comparatively docile in her hands, especially the girls, who were very willing to go to the Sisters' school with their hair combed in a new way. It was hard work for Mary — this attending to them amid continual confusion and babble of tongues, but she went through it bravely.

The walls of the “extension” were almost covered by shelves; on each shelf were a box of mignonette, heliotropes, pansies, and numbers of hyacinth glasses. A little box of shamrock and one of white clover, now in bloom, had been her father's pride. It was wonderful how he had managed to pack so many plants into such a small place, and still have them live and flourish; but he had done it.

Mary made an inventory of her stock. She could count on ten of the *bon silène* roses, plenty of hyacinths, a few carnations, many rose-geranium leaves, mignonette, and five or six pansies.

August was sent out to discover what flower was the most in demand, Mary minding the baby for him while he was away.

“The clover blossom and the hideous Japan-

ese rose are of no use," she thought. "Well, I can make thirty little nosegays, at least."

The Japanese rose was a straggling bush, picked up on the docks by her father. It was laden with small, deep-red, single flowers.

When August returned, he reported "Carnations and clover-blossoms; but the man says that flowers are scarce, and the evening is the best time to sell them."

"Very well, August. I will have the bunches ready about five o'clock, when the girls come home to take care of the baby."

August grinned. He was eager to earn something—eager, with all his sulkiness, to help his mother.

Wilhelmina did not go to school, and Mary took her down stairs to keep her out of mischief. A picture-book kept her quiet, for Wilhelmina's restlessness was due to lack of pleasant occupation.

Mary's carnations soon gave out. The Japanese roses were so red that they rivalled the carnations; and she concluded to risk it and mingle them with the clover-blossoms. The effect was good. "They wont bring much," she thought, "but they will help."

Suddenly, after her nosegays were made,

she realized that she had no tin-foil ; and stems of button-hole nosegays are always wrapped in tin-foil.

She flew up to August, forgetting her usual primness and dignity, and also the important fact that Wilhelmina was alone with breakable articles.

August grinned, and his eyes sparkled. He dived under the table, and arose with a cigar-box. It was filled with pieces of tin-foil, carefully ironed smooth.

“I saved them from smoking-tobacco packages. I begged them whenever I saw a man with a package.”

Mary thanked him.

August never threw anything away. He had marvellous collections of buttons, old nails, and even cancelled postage stamps.

At five o'clock the nosegays were ready, and neatly arranged in the lid of Mrs. Schmid's market-basket. Thirty red, white, and green bunches, in glittering silver holders ! and Mary had not touched any flowers, except the clover blossoms, carnations, and Japanese roses.

“I have had a happy day,” she thought, as she knelt in her room to say the Angelus ;

“the happiest day since father died. May his soul rest in peace!”

She took up her sewing — a frock for Filomena — and smiled now and then at some remembered prank of the terrible Wilhelmina.

About eight o'clock there was heard steps on the stair.

“Little old maid,” said a breathless voice, “may I come in?”

Mary opened the door. August and his mother entered.

“Ach, wunderschön!” said Mrs. Schmid, wrapping her bare, red arms in her apron.

August, running all over with grins, marched proudly up to the table, and drew from his pockets some handfuls of small coin. He put them carefully on the table.

“What is this?” asked Mary, astonished.

“It is yours,” cried August, with shining eyes. “I went to the florist in Fulton Street, and showed him the flowers. ‘Ah’ he said, ‘I didn’t know there were so many of the fashionable roses in bloom. What do you want for all those bunches of the *Rugosa rubra*? Ten cents? You can’t get more than that for ‘em.’ I saw he was anxious, so I said fifteen ‘Thirteen,’ he said. I knew then that I would get

twenty-five from the ladies and gentleman on the sidewalk. AND I GOT IT!"

Nobody could describe the pride in August's voice.

"I am so glad!" cried Mary, her eyes brightening. "And the ugly Japanese rose, too! I am so glad!"

"I bring," said August, "*seven dollars and a half, except one five cent piece with a hole in it.* But it was dark," he added.

"It is all yours. Take it, August. I am so glad!" cried Mary, thinking of the pleasure it must give him.

Mrs. Schmid was aghast. She felt that the "little old maid" must have gone crazy.

"No," she said, sharply. "My August will take only what he has earned. You may pay him what you will."

Mary fingered the money for an instant, and, seeing the justice of this, divided it into two parts.

"This is yours, August. Your mother will take it."

Mrs. Schmid was profuse in her thanks. August cried out, "To-morrow we will make more again, 'little old maid!'"

Mary laughed. She began to think it was

funny to be called "little, old maid" by these grave children.

She was very thankful. Here was enough to keep her in food for many days. Unconsciously, while thinking least of herself, of her convenience, of her future, she had found the work which would help her to live. Her whole thought had been for the family up-stairs. She had hoped to help them to bread; and the bread which she would soon lack had been brought to her own mouth.

The flower-seller made the most of that lagging May. Summer weather did not come that season until July, and the roses were all put back.

By July, Mary, who was very frugal, had added to her fifty dollars over a hundred and fifty; and Mrs. Schmid had also saved something.

In September, August heard of an old greenhouse over in Jersey. It was small, as was the plot of land around it. The owner was tired of it. He wanted to move nearer to the cemeteries, where the sale of plants is great. The rent was low and, after many consultations, in which even Wilhelmina took part, Mary rented the place. She reserved a room

in the old farm-house for herself. The Schmids, much improved in every way by Mary, occupied the rest; so they all went into business together, to supply the florists, not the public. They were wholesale dealers now.

One day, in the next spring, Mary having sent a bower of the lucky Japanese rose—which, as August reminded her somewhat regretfully, was selling at ten cents a bud—over to the church for the Repository, took up the old violin.

“I wonder what secret it holds,” she said, kissing it tenderly. “I wonder what my father meant—God rest his soul.”

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Mary never found what the old violin contained; but she already knew the secret, though she had not found it in the violin.

If she had, she would have read, pasted around the sounding stick, a paper containing these words, from the “Imitation of Christ:”

“Keep thy heart free and raised upward to God; because thou hast not here a lasting abode.”



FLOATING ON A BOARD.

PIERROT lived in Nantes, a town in Brittany; you will find in your maps. Pierrot's father died and left him to the care of his step-mother. Now Pierrot's step-mother was not a very agreeable woman, for she had a high temper, and was much given to scolding, with or without provocation; but I admit that Pierrot was not so easily managed.

“He is a wicked, wicked boy!” exclaimed Madame Choux to one of her neighbors, as Pierrot was seen wildly rushing down the street with one of her tin cooking utensils on his head, by way of a helmet. He was enacting a Prussian, pursued by the French soldiers—represented by a squad of other boys of various sizes.

“He'll break my heart some day, the good-for-nothing! He has already made a great dent

in my stew-pan. Pi-er-rot ! come here instantly," continued his step-mother.

Pierrot evaded his pursuer, and came to his step-mother flushed and heated. He gracefully elevated his tin head covering, as he approached her, and made a low bow. This was adding insult to injury, Madame thought. She grew red in the face, and gave Pierrot a box in the ear that sent him flying several yards away.

"What's that for?" asked Pierrot. He had become quite used to being boxed on the ear; he minded them as much as drops of summer rain now. "What's that for?"

His step-mother was unable to utter even a word. In speechless indignation she pointed to the battered stew-pan. Pierrot followed the direction of her finger with eyes full of suspense and indignation.

"Behold the ruin!" she said tragically.

"I didn't think!" stammered Pierrot.

"You never think," returned his step-mother. "Why did you take my best stew-pan, and use it thus, you ungrateful boy?"

"I didn't think; I did not mean to hurt it. I'm very sorry," said Pierrot, picking up the damaged article. "I'll never be a Prussian again; but one must have something on his

head when one is a Prussian, you know, for the French strike so hard."

"As I see," Madame returned, gazing upon her stew-pan. "No dinner for you to-day, no dinner—go up to the garret."

And Pierrot went, and was locked in; but Madame, in her excitement, forgot that there was a store of bread and dried fruit in the garret. Pierrot, however, soon found this out.

Experience had taught Madame that extreme quietness on Pierrot's part was a sure sign of brewing mischief. As Pierrot made no noise her fears were aroused, and she accordingly went up stairs to see what he was doing. Her indignation was very great, indeed, when she discovered the ravages her step-son made in the provisions; but when Pierrot begged her to admire an animal, either a dog or cow, which he had drawn with charcoal on her white garret wall, was much greater.

"Very well, my boy," she said, very well; you have spoiled my nice white wall, but you shan't escape punishment. To-morrow I shall send you to Le Cheval Rouge."

Pierrot with tears in his eyes protested against this sentence, and begged pardon for his fault; but his step-mother was inexorable;

as she noticed several half eaten pears, and her diminished stock of dried cherries, she felt that no punishment could be too severe for the young culprit.

Le Cheval Rouge, or, The Red Horse, was an inn in Nantes. Its landlady was a friend of Madame Choux. The latter had often threatened to send Pierrot there, as an apprentice to cook. Pierrot did not like the idea at all. His father had owned a small farm about a mile from the town, and Pierrot dreamed of working on it at some future time. Meanwhile he wanted to stay where he was. He attended one of the Brothers' schools and, in spite of his mischievous tricks, was a fine scholar. To do him justice, he was not a bad boy, although he was exceedingly thoughtless ; and it seemed hard, indeed, that he should be made a cook in spite of himself. It was hard to think that he should be sent away from home and among strangers.

Madame Choux did not relent ; and one fine morning Pierrot, with eyes red from weeping, and with his basket, containing his clothes and two white mice, presented himself at Le Cheval Rouge.

He was not received very kindly, for the

landlady had heard of his doings from his step-mother, and she told him if he wanted to wear one of her stew-pans, instead of a hat, she would make it red-hot for him before he put it on. Poor Pierrot hung his head in silence.

Time passed ; Pierrot had a hard time at the inn. He thought with regret of his pleasant school days, and his long walks along the beautiful Loire. He was kept running from morning till night. He had no leisure now for playing tricks, but in spite of his apparent quietness, the reputation he had gained still clung to him. When anything went wrong, the blame was, as a matter of course, usually left on his shoulders, and bad accounts were often carried to his step-mother.

“The ungrateful boy !” she would exclaim, “he will never come to a good end.”

Summer passed, and with autumn came a great deal of rain, so that the river rose above its banks, overflowing the surrounding country.

Madame Choux’s house stood detached from the others and very near the river. When the water rose it washed against the house with much force, and gradually reached the level of the second floor. Unfortunately, the house was situated on low ground.

Le Cheval Rouge was comparatively safe from the encroaching flood. As soon as Pierrot heard of the inundation, he hurried to some rising ground, in order to observe a view of his step-mother's house. To his surprise, he found that the whole space between himself and the dwelling was one rippling expanse of water.

"Where is my step-mother? Where is Madame Choux? Have you seen her?" he asked anxiously, of one of the bystanders.

No one had seen her. Pierrot called out loudly for her. But there was no response. His anxiety increased. She had never been very kind to him, but the thought that she might be in danger filled him with fear. She was sick in bed, perhaps unable to move, and the river was still rising. Boats were plying in various directions, removing people and furniture from the flooded dwellings. They were all engaged however. Pierrot could not procure one. In the meantime, Madame Choux might be drowning.

A peasant's cart was standing on the hill. Beside it lay several long and very wide boards. Seeing these, a new idea entered Pierrot's head. He threw one of these into the water, and seizing a pole from a bundle of newly cut saplings,

which were tied up in the cart, he sprang upon the board, much to the wonder of the lookers on.

“ I will bring Madame Choux back on this,” he said, in answer to their exclamations, “ and I’ll swim back myself.”

Pierrot stood on the board and, with a prayer on his lips, struck out boldly, pushing along by means of his pole. The water soon became very deep and the pole was useless. Then he knelt on his knees and paddled with his hands. He proceeded very slowly, but at last reached the house.

The water was scarcely a foot above the window of the second story. Into this window Pierrot climbed, drawing his board in after him. He saw at once he had not come in vain. His step-mother was seated on the floor, unable to move, her head just appearing above the surface of the flood. She uttered a cry of joy as she saw Pierrot.

Pierrot spoke some words of encouragement, and keeping one end of the board on the window, pushed the other through until it rested on the sill of the opposite window, thus forming a bridge across the room.

“ This is dry at least,” he said, advancing on it to the middle of the room. “ Now, mother, let me help you to get up there.”

“I cannot move, Pierrot,” she said; “I fell from the ladder and sprained my ankle. The water is rising.—O, Pierrot, I shall drown!”

“No, you shan’t!” said Pierrot. “Here, give me your two hands, and try to stand up. Now!” With her step-son’s assistance, and many groans, Madame Choux at last arose to her feet, and was helped to mount the board.

“You have saved my life, Pierrot; between fright and pain I could not move.”

The ladder that led up to the garret window had been washed away in the rushing of the flood; and so Pierrot and his step-mother were obliged to remain on the board, until a boat came in answer to their signals.

They reached dry land in safety, and the mistress of the Red Horse was graciously pleased to call Pierrot a brave little fellow, and to say he might be worth something yet.

His step-mother embraced him tenderly, scolding him at the same time for having been so reckless as to venture out on a board.

“I thought I was going to die,” she whispered to her friend the landlady, “and with the river all around me, I examined my conscience well, you may be sure. I think I have been too harsh with the boy.”

Pierrot left Le Cheval Rouge, and went home after the flood had subsided. He has resumed his studies, and Madame Choux and he live on the best of terms. His experience at the Red Horse learned him the value of home, and I am sure he takes care not to incur its loss by any mischievous tricks.

The last time I was in Nantes, I asked the venerable curé who was the best boy in his parish, and he answered :

“ Pierrot Choux ; or, Pierrot of the board, as his school-fellows called him.”





JUNE ROSES

SUCH a beautiful morning ! The azure sky was flooded with sunlight, which, escaping from the meshes of the graceful white clouds, was just beginning to touch the earth and sip the dew from the grass.

The grass in the 'Thornes' yard was not capable of accommodating half a pint of dew, and so the sun did not gain much by sipping from it. The 'Thornes' yard was so very small. There was a grass-plot in the centre, and around it in a circle grew flowers — pansies, heliotropes, and two rose-bushes.

Two little girls in very large straw hats were extremely busy in this garden, which was surrounded by tall, brick houses on every side. One little girl was searching for any tiny weed that might presume to show itself above the ground ; the other was looking for bugs and

worms among the leaves of her cherished plants.

“Oh, Nora! do come here!” cried Bridget Thorne, addressing her sister. “Two new buds half open! Isn’t it funny that we didn’t see them last night! Oh, how sweet they are!” And Bridget bent her head down among the thorns and leaves of the bush, to inhale the odor of the buds. She drew it up rather quickly, however, with a long red scratch on her nose.

“Just like me,” she said ruefully. “I never can do things carefully.”

“That’s because you never try;” and Nora, gently pushing back the thorny branches, enjoyed the perfume to her heart’s content.

“There’s no rose without its thorn,” returned Bridget, with the air of a philosopher.

“These pale, white roses are such beauties! Why, here’s two more buds. The next day after to-morrow is Corpus Christi. We’ll have a lovely bouquet for the High Altar, if there are any flowers on the other bush.”

“There are five crimson buds ready to open,” announced Nora.

Bridget gave a little scream of delight, and dashed headforemost into the red rose-bush.

“Take care, Bridget,” cried her sister, “or

your face will look like a map, with the rivers drawn in red ink !”

“Let me see,” said Bridget, “heliotrope, pansies, roses, and geranium-leaves. That will make a very pretty nosegay.”

“A nosegay with a meaning,” replied Nora. “The red roses remind me of Our Saviour’s Blood ; the white roses of the stainless heart of His Mother ; the pansies mean thought, and tell me to think of these things ; and the heliotrope must mean prayer, for its perfume is always ascending.”

“I’m glad you told me, Nora,” said her sister, “for I never should have thought of it myself.”

“Good-morning, girls !” called a shrill, piping voice above them.

“Who’s that ?” they both asked.

“Good-morning, girls ! Good-morning, girls ! Good-morning, girls !”

The girls looked up, and saw suspended to a nail, under a second-story window, a small cage with bright steel bars. In the cage was a little bird with blue-tipped wings.

“It’s only Jack’s jay,” said Nora. “Jack has taught him to say ‘Good-morning.’”

“Dear me ?” said Bridget, in an injured

tone, "Jack hasn't a bit of politeness. He might teach his bird to say 'Good-morning, young ladies,' instead of 'girls.'"

"But we are girls," said Nora.

"People needn't be always telling us so. If I had a long dress, and my hair all wriggled about, I'd look more like a young lady than that hateful, stuck up" —

"Bridget!"

"Well, I won't say any more. Charlie is a pretty bird. Charlie!"

Charlie responded by imitating a dog barking.

"Brother Jack thinks a great deal of that bird," said Nora. "It's about a year since Uncle Robert brought Charlie here."

"Oh, Nora!" broke in her sister, "do you remember that beautiful house we passed in our walk with papa last Sunday afternoon?"

"Up on the hill?"

"Yes. Well, Mr. Morgan lives there. One day last week he came past our house just as Charlie was whistling 'Yankee Doodle.' He stopped and listened, and then wanted to buy Charlie, but Jack wouldn't sell him. Mr. Morgan said that if he changed his mind he might take Charlie up to the house on the hill."

“Jack won’t change his mind. He likes Charlie too well. We had better go in and get ready for school. I’m in a hurry to tell all the girls about our roses.”

“Roses are very scarce this June,” said Nora, as the two sisters entered the house. “I looked through the bars of Mr. Morgan’s garden gate and saw that he has some; but beside his and ours, I haven’t seen a single rose in town.”

The next morning a chorus, or rather, a duet of lamentation was heard in the Thornes’ yard. The two girls, on coming down to resume their gardening operations as usual, had discovered that there was not a single bud left on either of the rose bushes. Who had taken the buds?

“Let us ask Jack,” said Bridget, trying not to cry.

“Jack doesn’t know anything about it, I’m sure,” said Nora.

But Bridget called him.

“You girls will never let a fellow be quiet,” said Jack, who had been trying to ‘do’ a stubborn sum in fractions. “What do you want?”

“Do you know who took our roses?”

“Why I took ’em,” said Jack. “Each of our fellows wore one in his jacket button-hole,

last night, at the club. It was Jim Reilley's birthday, you know."

Jack's club met every Tuesday evening, in a room over Mrs. Thorne's back kitchen. Its members were boys belonging to the school that Jack attended. The club read compositions, made speeches, and played checkers; but they were strictly forbidden to sing in concert. They had done so once, and the neighbors had arisen in a body and protested against it.

"And so you took all our roses for that old club!" cried Bridget. "Selfish boy!"

"And we intended to take them to church for the tabernacle," said Nora beginning to cry.

"How was I to know that?" demanded Jack, feeling sorry.

"Couldn't you ask!" said Bridget. "Come away, Nora; I wouldn't c-r-r-y!" and Bridget thrust her fingers into her eyes, and ran into the house.

Jack was really sorry for his thoughtlessness. But how could he remedy it now? he asked himself. There were few roses this year. Mr. Morgan's bushes and those of Jack's sisters were the only ones in bloom; he did not like the thought of asking Mr. Morgan for some of his roses, and he was sure that gentleman would

not sell them for money. But Mr. Morgan offered to buy Charlie. He knew that Mr. Morgan would give him any number of roses for the bird. Jack thought that he could not part with the dear little fellow. He went up stairs, allowed Charlie to hop from the cage and perch upon his finger. Charlie, knowingly, twinkled his eyes and said: "Good-morning."

"Yes you must go, Charlie, for I can't spoil Nora and Bridget's pleasure, and I must give them some roses for the tabernacle," Jack sighed.

Feeling very sad, Jack took Charlie and his cage, and walked up to the house on the hill. It was a very fine house indeed, with young trees growing around it, and surrounded by a garden filled with the choicest flowers. Jack's heart sank as he rang the bell.

Mr. Morgan took Charlie, and gave Jack a huge bunch of red, pink, yellow, and white roses, telling him at the same time that he might have some of his best plants as soon as they could be safely removed.

Jack was glad that he made this sacrifice when he saw how greatly his sisters were delighted by the wealth of flowers he brought them.

On the following morning, when Jack awoke, he heard somebody calling out : “ Good-morning ! ”

He looked from his window, and saw Charlie perched on a twig, just without.

Jack took him back to Mr. Morgan. But whenever Charlie could escape he invariably flew to Jack’s window, and said : “ Good-morning ! ” then he would quietly wait to be carried back to his new master.





A PASSION FLOWER.

MAY had come, crowned with pansies and clover-blossoms, and staggering beneath her great load of the flowers of the peach and cherry. With the golden sunshine adding a deeper tinge to her buttercups and dandelions, and with an ocean of perfume flowing from her floral burden, she hastens each year to throw herself at the feet of the Blessed Mother.

Through the balmy air and through the morning sunlight, which touched each head with its warm fingers as if in benediction, a long line of boys and girls were entering a church. They were going in procession to honor the May Queen — the fairest and purest of all created beings.

On the other side of the street, watching the procession, stood a little newsboy within the shadow of the wall. He was a small boy — ap-

parently not over ten years of age. His clothes were clean and neatly patched. He looked wistfully at the crowd of happy children, until a slight breeze rustling among the unsold morning papers in his hand reminded him of "business."

He started to move on when two ladies passed him, one of them carrying a large bouquet. Ned Murphy, the newsboy, ran after them. "Morning papers, ladies!"

The ladies stopped, and the one with the flowers took out her pocketbook, but Ned Murphy forgot the pennies she gave him; he even forgot to give her a paper; he just stood still and looked at the flowers. Poor Ned had never seen any floral production more beautiful than the stunted geraniums that he kept in a cracked cup at home. This lady's bouquet was really exquisite, and Ned devoured it with his eyes. The owner gazed at him with an amused smile.

"Gracious, how the child stares!" said her companion.

Ned blushed, picked up his papers and thanked the ladies. The one with the bouquet broke off a flower and gave it to Ned. The boy was overwhelmed with gratitude.

“ You have given him the passion-flower — the only one ! ”

“ So I have ! But it can't be helped now. ”

Ned by this time was fully a square ahead, with the precious flower in his button-hole, holding his hand over it, for fear some envious comrade might snatch the treasure.

He stopped at each street fountain on his way to sprinkle the flower with water, in order that it might not wither. When his papers were all sold, he sat down on a shady doorstep to contemplate his prize. How beautiful it was ! Ned thought he could see all the instruments of Our Saviour's Passion within its purple petals. He did not notice the flight of time as he held the flower in various positions, and enjoyed its beauty in different lights.

Ned's life-story was a very short one : His mother had died when he was a baby. His father was a sailor, and had gone to sea, placing him in charge of an old woman who kept an apple stand on a corner. This old woman died, leaving him her business, and to his own resources. Ned was not successful in the apple business. He was naturally tender-hearted, and he allowed a school-boy to run up a bill for a dollar's worth of pippins. The school-boy

refused to pay, and Ned became insolvent. After this he went into the paper business, a sadder and a wiser boy. Ned lodged in a small garret at the top of a tenement house.

'Ned had taught himself to read by means of the signboards and the headings of his papers.

He longed ardently for books, and he read eagerly anything that came in his way. He had been taught his prayers by the old apple woman, and among other things, he had read part of an old catechism. So he was not ill-instructed ; but he had never been Confirmed, nor had he ever made his first Communion.

When Ned again passed the church on his way to obtain more papers, the procession of children was coming out. He stood and watched it as he had before done, and when they had all gone he entered the empty church himself. Ned went up to the altar rails. The faint scent of incense lingered in the air ; a flood of crimson light fell from the stained window upon the white lilies grouped around the Blessed Virgin's altar. Ned knelt down. The altar was almost hidden in the flowers which the children had brought. Ned felt a pang as he thought *he* had nothing to offer to that Holy Mother.

Yes, he had ! his prayers and his passion-

flower. He softly took the flower from the button hole of his jacket, and laid it reverently within the altar rails.

Shortly afterwards, the lady who had bought the paper from Ned that morning knelt at the same altar. She noticed her own passion-flower within the rails, and, as she went out, saw Ned going down the steps.

This lady — Mrs. Woodleigh was her name — felt interested in the little boy who had offered the one bright object he possessed to the Queen of May. Mrs. Woodleigh spoke to him, and by degrees learned his story. She walked along with him to the newspaper office ; by which condescension Ned was greatly confused, flattered and delighted ; and one of his brother newsboys, seeing it, became so polite as to offer him a bite out of a very hard apple — a mark of favor which Ned never received from that particular boy.

Mrs. Woodleigh did not lose sight of Ned. She gave him a new suit of clothes, in which to attend Mass and Catechism every Sunday ; and after a time she succeeded in procuring him a place as assistant to a friend's gardener.

Ned is very happy now. He helps his old comrades, the newsboys, whenever he can, and

Mrs. Woodleigh often makes him the instrument of distributing her bounty.

Ned is very thankful, too. Looking back, he very often wonders what he would have been now, had he not laid a passion-flower on the altar that morning in May.





BLUFF'S BOY.

CHAPTER I.

ALONE IN THE WORLD.

TOM BLUFF was a sailor. The phrase “rough and ready” describes him exactly. He was neither very young nor very old. You could not get nearer his age than that. In fact, he did not know the year or day of his birth, but when he went ashore and took a drop too much, he always did it on pretense of keeping his birthday.

He was good-natured and good-hearted; but if he did not mend his ways, his future, in this world and the next, was not likely to be very happy.

One evening, when his ship was in port and he had been keeping his birthday — about the sixth that year — he went reeling through the

streets to his boarding-house ; his foot slipped, he tried to steady himself, failed, and fell, striking his head on the corner of the curbstone that bounded the sidewalk.

The street ran along the wharves and was seldom frequented after business hours. Tom Bluff might have lain there all night, alone and unassisted, had not a small boy crept from under a pile of packing-boxes and hesitatingly approached the prostrate sailor. The stone had made a sharp cut in Tom's head, from which a stream of blood was slowly trickling.

The small boy raised the head of the unconscious sailor, examined the cut, and then went back to the boxes. In a short time he returned with a large coarse bag. The dusk of evening was fast giving place to the darkness of night. Having torn a large piece from the bag, the boy lighted a match and again looked at the wound.

He staunched the flowing blood with a portion of the bag, and with another bandaged the cut.

After awhile Tom Bluff opened his eyes. He was quite sober now. He raised his hand and felt the rough cloth on his head.

"Hey, youngster, what does this mean?" he demanded.

"You fell and cut your head, sir," replied

the boy, speaking with a refined accent that accorded ill with his ragged dress. "Can you walk?"

"I am rather unsteady on my pins," muttered Tom, trying to rise, "but I guess I can manage to get up and get."

"I'll help you over to the boxes, and then I'll run for a doctor."

"No, sir-ee!" interrupted Tom. "No doctor need apply; I am only a little topsy-turvy. Give us a lift, youngster, and I'll be all right in a second."

Tom succeeded in reaching the boxes, and stretched himself on the pavement with his back against one of them.

"Much obliged, youngster," he said, having made himself as comfortable as circumstances would allow; "do you live hereabouts?"

"I don't live anywhere in particular," said the boy, creeping into a box that was turned on its side.

"What!" demanded Tom. "Don't go tryin' to stuff me, boy."

"I live wherever I can, and it's mighty hard to find a place sometimes."

"Great Julius Cæsar!" exclaimed Tom, opening his eyes in amazement. "You don't

tell me so ; a whipper-snapper like you all alone in the world ! What's your name ? ”

“ Lewis Arlyn.”

“ Where are your parents ? ”

“ My mother is dead since spring,” answered the boy, in a trembling voice, “ and my father was wrecked at sea.”

“ Before the mast, I'll be bound ! A sailor, was he ? ”

“ No, he went away from mother and me on business, and never came back. He went in a ship called the *Ariel*.”

“ Went to pieces out at sea, I've heard. And so your mother waited for him, and then died ? ”

“ Yes ; two months ago.”

“ Poor boy,” muttered the sailor, winking violently. “ Blame it ! the damp gets into a fellow's eyes on nights like these.”

There was a short silence.

“ How on earth do you get along, youngster ? ”

“ I sell matches during the day.” And Lewis Arlyn took several bundles from the packing-box. “ They're first rate, sir ; warranted to strike fire at ” —

“ Eye to business, I see,” laughed Tom.

“Well, I’m better now; come and help me home.”

Catching hold of Lewis’ hand, the sailor rose to his feet. As the two went slowly through the streets, Tom reflected deeply. Lewis was about to take his leave when they reached the boarding-house, but Tom held him by the shoulder.

“Look here, sonny,” he said in his rough, but kindly tone, “I’m going to adopt you. I’ll give you an education, though I’ll have to give up my birthday and stop my grog to raise the needful. Come in, I say.”

And the astonished boy suddenly found himself adopted by Tom Bluff.

Time passed. Tom became each day more attached to Lewis. The boy was a marvel to him. The way in which he could add up the figures in Tom’s rather mixed up accounts was simply “stunning,” as the sailor expressed it.

Lewis Arlyn was a good boy. I don’t mean to say that he was a very quiet boy, or that he did not like fun and play, but I do mean to say that he was a good Catholic, and he gained great influence over Tom, who, before starting on his next voyage, received Our Lord for the first time since his boyhood.

CHAPTER II.

BEARS AND ICEBERGS.

For half a year, while Tom Bluff was away at sea, Lewis went to school; but after awhile he grew restless, not from dislike to school, but because he could not bear the knowledge that Tom was working hard for him. He wanted to do something to help his benefactor.

Around his neck he had worn a chain of peculiar fashion, to which were attached a tiny cross and medal.

When Tom returned from his second voyage, Lewis implored that on the next he might go as cabin-boy. Tom argued against it, but Lewis persisted.

“Well,” said the sailor at last, “a wilful boy must have his way. But God is on the sea as well as on the land. You’ve made me believe that, Lewis, and you’ll be as safe up among the icebergs as down here. You shall be a cabin-boy, if our captain will take you.

Lewis became a cabin-boy on board the *Morning Star*, bound for Greenland. His exemplary conduct and prompt attention to his duties made

him a favorite with every one on board. The sailors called him Tom Bluff's boy.

The *Morning Star* lay in an inlet on the coast of an island in Hudson Bay. Around the ship an unbroken field of ice glittered in the red light of the Arctic sun. In the distance, majestic icebergs reared their heads in the cold glow of the "frozen light."

The *Morning Star* was ice-bound. She would be compelled to remain in her present position until the breaking up of the ice. This generally takes place in the month of July.

The sailors were amusing themselves on the ice in various ways — playing leap-frog, building sleds, and skating.

Tom Bluff and Lewis had wandered some distance from the vessel, and were now concealed from the view of the men on the ice by an immense berg.

Lewis had made the acquaintance of several Esquimaux. One Esquimau boy, named Muk-he-be-out, had taken quite a fancy to Lewis, because he sometimes treated him to candles. Muk-he-be-out devoured the tallow with great relish, but he always took care to pull the wicks from his mouth.

Muk-he-be-out's father and his two eldest

brothers were helping Tom and Lewis to build a hut of ice in the Esquimau fashion. The dogs belonging to Muk-he-be-out's family were fighting and snarling among themselves around the hut.

The hut-builders were too deeply engrossed in their business to notice that a large white bear had just rounded a corner of the iceberg.

The dogs at once set up a shrill howl.

Muk-he-be-out first noticed it, and seizing his spear, aimed a blow at the bear's head. His father and brothers also advanced, spears in hand, to confront the intruder.

Lewis was inside the half-built hut, and did not hear the alarm. Tom was outside, but he had no other weapon than his knife.

Before Muk-he-be-out's spear touched the head of the bear, another appeared on the scene. Taken by surprise, the two Esquimaux stood still for an instant, with upraised spears, and, actuated by one impulse, they fled rapidly from the place.

Tom and Lewis were left to face these ferocious animals.

Lewis was unarmed, and Tom knew it. He grasped his knife tightly. Lewis was still in the hut. There was no time to lose. Tom

resolved to fight the bears, and give the boy time to escape.

“Lewis,” he cried, “come out.”

Lewis emerged from the aperture, and turned pale at the sight before him.

“Run, Lewis,” said Tom, keeping his eye on the foremost bear. “Run back to the ship as fast as you can.”

“No,” said Lewis hoarsely, “I’ll not go without you.”

“Go!” cried Tom. “These monsters would tear us to pieces before we could run a hundred yards. Run, while I keep them at bay.”

“I’ll stand by you,” said Lewis, seizing a block of ice as a weapon of defence.

The foremost bear raised himself upon his legs and sprang forward upon Tom. The sailor fell backwards with the weight of the ponderous paws on his shoulders.

Lewis set his teeth hard, and murmured a prayer, at the same time preparing to launch his block of ice.

Tom lay wholly at the mercy of the bear. In falling, his knife had been knocked from his hand.

Suddenly a pistol-shot reëchoed among the ice mountains. The foremost bear uttered a roar of pain, and, leaving Tom, hastened to

meet a new assailant. Another pistol-ball brought him to the ice, roaring with rage and pain. The second bear, probably thinking that discretion was the best part of valor, turned tail and disappeared behind the iceberg.

A man, clad in the fur dress and hood of the Esquimaux, and carrying a revolver in his hand, emerged from among the heaps of ice and lichen-covered rocks.

Not noticing Lewis, the man fired another shot at the bear. With a low, rumbling groan, the animal expired. He knelt down near Tom to examine his injuries. He had just succeeded in loosening the sailor's neck-cloth when he turned pale, and seemed about to fall. He caught sight of the tiny cross that Lewis had given Tom.

Tom was only stunned. The color came back to his face, and he started up.

"That cross!" gasped the stranger, speaking English. "Where did you get it?" He clutched Tom's arm convulsively.

"Why that belongs to Lewis," said Tom, rather bewildered. "Where is Lewis?"

"Lewis!"

Lewis knew that voice. With a glad cry he ran forward into the stranger's arms.

The man in Esquimau dress was Lewis Arlyn's father.

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The *Ariel* had been wrecked in Hudson Bay. It was crushed between two icebergs.

Mr. Arlyn was the only person who survived the disaster, which had occurred further up the coast. He had been treated kindly by the Esquimaux. Among them he had watched and waited for the coming of a vessel to deliver him. Hearing that a ship was weather-bound on the coast of the island, he had come, fearing yet hoping to make sure of it. He had arrived in time to save Lewis and Tom from a horrible death.

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The *Morning Star* safely reached home.

Tom no longer goes down to the sea in ships. He lives with Lewis and his father. They are all happy. Mr. Arlyn is happy because he has found his son; Lewis is happy because he has found his father; Tom is happy because Lewis is happy, and they are all happy because they are all good.

Don't you think the last reason is the best reason for happiness.



A SPRIG OF SHAMROCK.

I

ON a certain March morning, when the air was full of sunlight, and the faint breath of early spring, Joe Murphy came down stairs whistling blithely as a lark.

In the small room which served the Murphys as parlor, dining-room, and kitchen, Mrs. Murphy was getting breakfast ready—breakfast for two, for Mrs. Murphy and her son were all the family.

The room was a perfect picture of neatness. From the snow-white boards of the floor to the clean, polished glass that covered the print of Our Lady of Sorrows on the wall, every object in the poorly-furnished room showed the presence of careful hands.

Mrs. Murphy was a cheerful, gentle woman, so short in stature that, when tall ruddy-checked

Joe stood by her, her head barely reached the level of his shoulders. Time and trouble had turned her hair gray, but her face was still kind and cheerful in expression; and when her eyes rested on her son, the proud and happy light that shone there was a sight worth seeing.

It did not take long to prepare breakfast. It was very frugal at the best of times, and this was Lent.

“Well, mother,” said Joe, taking his hat and pushing his chair back, “To-morrow is St. Patrick’s Day.”

“Sure I couldn’t forget that, Joe. See how blooming my shamrock is. You’ll have a fine sprig to wear in your coat to-morrow.”

Joe laughed cheerily, and, walking over to the window, looked admiringly at the tuft of shamrock that grew in a very red flower-pot. Joe’s mother had brought that shamrock from the old country.

“To-morrow,” said Joe, with a mysterious air, “I’ll give you something for your sprig of shamrock, mother.”

His mother looked up with a pleased smile on her face.

“Don’t ask me to tell you beforehand. I wouldn’t spoil the surprise by words.”

“I can wait,” she said, knowing that Joe was more eager to speak than she to hear. “It’s nearly half-past seven, and you should be at the office at eight, you know. I hear James Tyrrell on the stairs.”

“Would you really like to know what I’ll give you?”

“I am not impatient, said this provoking mother. “It’s time you were off, Joe.”

“Well, then, it’s good news, mother.”

“Good news will keep, Joe.”

“Sure, I can’t keep it, then. Mr. Maher promised yesterday to raise my wages. Five dollars a week after to-morrow. Hurrah!” Joe threw up his cap, and performed a double-shuffle. “We’ll have a nice carpet, mother, and you shall have a new bonnet, and a shawl, and spectacles with gold rims, mother—yes, spectacles with gold rims! Hurrah!”

And, having unburdened his mind of the secret that tortured him since the previous evening, he hastened away to his daily labor.

“He never thinks of himself at all, at all,” murmured Mrs. Murphy, lifting the corner of her apron to wipe away a tear.

Mrs. Murphy had endured many trials. Her husband and three children had died in Ire-

land. Poor, yet hopeful, she and her son had come to America. Joe was employed in the law office of Maher & Arnold. He ran errands, copied documents, and performed such other duties as fell to his share. Mr. Maher held him in great estimation. Joe's companion in the office was James Tyrrell. Tyrrell was fifteen — a year older than Joe. During the hurried seasons he divided Joe's usual labors, but at other times he sat at a high desk, in an upright, elderly way.

James Tyrrell lived in the same house with Joe. A distant relative of his — an old woman who kept an apple-stand on the corner — rented rooms immediately above those occupied by the Murphys.

Tyrrell never of late arrived at the office in time, and when he did come he was generally half-asleep. The trouble was, he had become acquainted with "a jolly set of fellows," with whom he went to theatres, or roamed about the streets at night. Mr. Maher had not offered to raise his salary; on the contrary, he had threatened to dismiss him if he did not become more punctual. He envied Joe, but he made no effort to imitate the good conduct that made the latter a favorite with his employer.

II.

St. Patrick's Day, Joe Murphy had gone to early Mass; and as he walked briskly up towards the office, with his mother's sprig of shamrock pinned on his coat, it would have been difficult to find a happier boy in Philadelphia. Five dollars a week! The prospect was pleasant; and in his mind's-eye, Joe already saw many improvements in the little room at home.

Entering the office, Joe opened the shutters. After a while, Tyrrell came in yawning.

"Good morning," said Joe.

"Early enough to-day, I hope, to please old Maher. I say, what's that green thing you've got in in your button-hole, Murphy?"

"Shamrock."

"You're a green 'un," sneered Tyrrell; "faith I'd not be letting every one know I was Irish."

"More shame for you," said Joe, gravely.

At this moment a gray-haired, kind-looking man entered. Tyrrell at once rushed to his desk, and pretended to write with all his might.

Mr. Maher said good morning, and then went into his private office. He came out in a short time, with something in his hand.

“You’ve never seen anything like this, have you, boys.” From a dainty cotton-lined box he took a watch and showed it to the boys. They were both loud in their expressions of admiration. The watch was in the form of a tiny gold rose; each petal was exquisitely cut.

While Mr. Maher was showing the watch a loud burst of music sounded without, accompanied by applauding voices.

“What is that?” asked Mr. Maher.

“The procession. St. Patrick’s Day, you know, sir.”

“Oh, yes.” Mr. Maher carefully laid the watch within Tyrrell’s desk and went to the door; Tyrrell and Joe followed him. Banners fluttered in the sunlit air, horses pranced, men in the ranks answered the cheers of those on the sidewalk, and the inspiring melody from the various bands added life and animation to the scene. Mr. Maher and Joe stood watching the gay pageant, but Tyrrell stole back to the desk, opened it, took something out, hesitated an instant, and then joined the other two at the door. He took his stand very close to Joe.

Neither Mr. Maher nor Joe noticed his movement.

“To work, boys ! to work !” said Mr. Maher, when the procession had passed. “Why where’s the watch?”

He had lifted up the lid of Tyrrell’s desk. The watch was gone.

“Perhaps you dropped it, sir, instead of putting it into the desk,” suggested Tyrrell.

Mr. Maher shook his head negatively ; they searched for it on the floor, however. Again Mr. Maher went to the desk. He examined it minutely. Between the desk and the lid lay a sprig of shamrock, as if it had been accidentally caught and crushed there.

Mr. Maher glanced at Joe. The boy’s shamrock had disappeared from his coat. How had it got into Tyrrell’s desk ? A troubled expression swept across Mr. Maher’s face. The search was renewed in vain.

At last Mr. Maher said : “Now, boys, I am sure I left my wife’s watch in the desk. While we were standing in the doorway no one entered, that is certain. The back door is bolted, as you see ; but the watch is gone. From these facts, what is your conclusion ?”

“That one of us took the watch,” said Tyr-

rell. "You may search me, sir." He hastily turned his pockets inside out. Joe plunged his hands into his pockets, and then his face became very red. Tyrrell had been watching him. He seized Joe's right hand, and dragged it out. The watch was in it.

"Joe Murphy's the thief!" cried Tyrrell.

Joe indignantly protested his innocence. Mr. Maher listened patiently and sorrowfully. When Joe's tears entirely choked his words, Mr. Maher spoke :

"While you were looking at the watch in my hand, I noticed that sprig of shamrock on your coat. A few minutes afterwards, the shamrock is found in Tyrrell's desk, and the watch is found in your pockets. Say no more ; you are no longer in my employ."

With a bursting heart and a throbbing brain, Joe walked home. In an hour all happiness had flown. The streets were gay with flying flags and martial music, but for him everything was gloomy.

His mother comforted him. She, at least, believed him. "God will make it all right," she said.

Two months had passed. The Murphys are on the verge of starvation. Joe, with his name tarnished by the suspicion of a dishonest act, has been unable to obtain employment; but, in spite of that, he has plenty of work on his hands, for James Tyrrell is lying ill with smallpox in the close room at the top of the house. The old apple woman deserted him at the first sign of the disease.

Had not Joe Murphy volunteered to minister to him, he would have been left alone. A few moments ago the doctor told Joe to send for a priest. The priest came, and, after the last rites were administered, called Joe and the doctor into the room.

We will not dwell on the scene. In the presence of these three witnesses, the dying boy confessed that he, to satisfy his hatred and envy, had hidden Mr. Maher's watch in Joe's pocket on St. Patrick's Day, and that he had taken the sprig of shamrock and placed it in the desk, in order more plainly to fix the guilt on Joe. When he had told these things, James Tyrrell died, contrite and forgiven.

Mr. Maher took Joe into favor again. His wages have been raised several times since, and Mrs. Murphy rejoices in the new shawl,

bonnet, and gold-rimmed spectacles that Joe promised her. But Joe never sees a sprig of shamrock without feeling grateful to Him “Who made it all right.”





A GOOD EXAMPLE.*

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF MADAME GUIZOT
DE WILL.

I WAS ill; I could not leave my room, and I was often forced to spend many hours on a sofa. Winter had set in, and my windows looked on a narrow, gloomy court, behind the high walls of which daylight disappeared early. I could not read all day, and I needed some amusement, as those whom I loved were called away by pressing duties. I did not care to spend all my time in counting the flowers on the wall-paper, or in tracing the design of the carpet, and so I had my sofa placed near a window.

“You will feel the draughts,” somebody said, although this was plainly impossible, as the smallest cracks were closed up. “I will see all that goes on outside,” I answered.

* Slightly altered.

My husband laughed. "You will see servants shaking carpets, and maids gossiping instead of minding their work." It's a great pity that all we have is two apartments fronting on the street."

"Don't be discontented," I said; "rooms on the street are dear, and I intend to observe many things in my little court. This evening I will tell you what I have seen."

Hardly had I been installed on my sofa near the window, when I uttered an exclamation of delight. Louise, my old waiting-maid, who had known me all my life, looked up in astonishment.

"I see children down on the first floor of the opposite house, Louise. I am sure I'll not want for amusement now."

She smiled sadly, and a tender remembrance made my heart beat quickly. I hid my face in my hands, for I had a little girl once, but her Guardian Angel had led her from earth into the home of her Heavenly Father. I thought of my two boys at school, who came to see me on Sunday, every two weeks. Sighing, I turned my attention to the children in the window.

At first, I thought the elder one resembled my dear Maria, for she had golden hair, blue

eyes, a fair skin, and a sad, sweet expression. Her sister was much darker in hair, eyes, and complexion, and very lively and merry. In her arms the latter held a pretty little white cat.

All at once my interest became centered on this cat. The children brought out a miniature table and an arm-chair, both seeming to be part of the furniture of a doll's house.

The table was adorned by a cover of lace-bordered muslin. Having placed a small looking-glass, a basin, and a soap-dish upon it, the yellow-haired maiden poured out some water. I watched attentively through the window-panes. What unfortunate doll was about to have her paint destroyed and her limbs broken by being washed in a basin of water?

“And hot water, too!” I cried, as the brunette appeared with a tiny kettle, her once white apron covered with charcoal. The two girls approached the easy-chair, and placed some object in it. What could it be? A small object in a gray morning gown, trimmed with green ribbons, and a cape on its shoulders! It was certainly not a doll, for it moved and turned its head.

The occupant of the chair was the white cat! It maintained its seat with the gravity of a

human being (and with more than the gravity of *some* small human beings); and, though its dress must have been somewhat uncomfortable, it made no attempt to scratch its little mistress. One of them plunged its front paws into the basin. The water was too hot, and the cat withdrew its paws, and shook them with a piteous air. When the girls had nearly smothered it with consoling caresses, they tempered the heat with cold water, and the ceremony proceeded. The tiny white paws were soaped, sprinkled with cologne and dried; but at this interesting moment I sunk back fatigued among my cushions, and so the toilet continued without me.

“Do you know who those children are, Louise?”

Louise, bent on discovering what had interested me so strongly, had ceased knitting, to look from the other window.

“That cat is a good animal,” she remarked, before answering me. “Ten times at least I thought the beast would have scratched the little stupids. The idea of washing a cat!—and cats detest water on their feet! Yes, madame, they are children of a man employed in a government office. Their mother died

last year ; their father is away all day, and so the poor little ones are left to amuse themselves as they can.

“They do not seem very melancholy,” I thought, turning again to the window, but the little girls had gone. The cat remained, however, still tied in its chair ; its head rested on its breast, and it was sleeping after the fatigues of the day.

“Its naughty mistresses must have forgotten it,” I thought.

The winter wind blew roughly against the panes, and so I could not open the window, to call across the court. I took up my book, in order to profit by the last gleams of daylight. When I again glanced towards their side of the court, the cat, the chair, and the toilet-table were no longer there. I recounted to my husband the discovery I had made.

“Boilou lives over there,” he said ; “I meet him sometimes.”

“Do you know him ?” I asked eagerly.

“A little — sufficiently to salute him, and even to say a few words.

“The little girls have no mother, and I have no daughter,” I thought.

“When you meet him again, tell him your

wife is sick, and that by sending his little girls to her, sometimes, he will perform an act of true charity.”

“For his children ; I don’t doubt that,” said my husband, laughing. “They’ll fatigue you ; this business of the cat makes me think —”

“That they can amuse themselves.”

Two days after this dialogue, the small maidens entered my room conducted by their nurse, whom I sent to Louise in the kitchen. My two little friends stood timidly at the foot of my sofa.

A near view of them convinced me that my heart had caused me to imagine a resemblance which did not exist between my little Maria and the elder mistress of the white cat. Maria always wore an air of grave sadness, as if, young as she was, she already felt the weight of life ; my visitor had nothing of this. She crossed her arms on her breast and regarded me with a fearless glance. I caught sight of the cat, half-hidden in her cloak. I held out my hands, and the little girls began to laugh.

“Theresa wanted to bring our cat,” said the elder.

“It was Genevieve, who feared Faradet would get tired all by himself,” said the younger ;

“and, then, he is so nice that we thought he would amuse you,” they both chimed in.

The pretty animal condescended to roll himself up in my cushion and to fall asleep, just as if he were an ordinary cat. His mistresses found seats on the carpet at each side of me.

“We didn’t bring his bed,” said Theresa, “and so he must sleep as he can. At home he has a night-gown for cold nights.”

“Indeed!”

“Yes,” continued Genevieve, gravely; “he sleeps in our doll’s bed, but he’s much nicer than a doll; isn’t he? We put him to bed in the evening, like a little baby, with a tiny, tiny jug of hot water at his feet, so that they’ll not get cold. We wanted him to wear a night-cap, but it hurt his ears; they’re too long.” And the little maid softly caressed the cat’s head. He never opened his eyes, but purred his thanks.

“He knows me,” she continued, “he knows where we are. Sometimes we go about with papa’s old dog—an old, old dog, who is always in papa’s room, under the bureau; but we make him go out now and then, when Celestine comes to shake the carpet.”

I shuddered—good house-wife that I was—

at the thought of this carpet on which a dog slept, and which was only shaken now and then; but the little babbler went on: "Then Faradet looks for us everywhere. He doesn't like to be alone; he moans, he calls us, and sometimes he cries so loudly that he makes our rat afraid, but in general our rat loves Faradet, who never tries to hurt him."

The thought of such a menagerie in a small room overwhelmed me — a dog, a cat, a rat.

"But what do you do with the rat?"

"Oh, he is sweet! He's a white rat — as white as Faradet. They gave him to us in the country," said Genevieve, with an air of importance, "when we were in Normandy last year. Were you ever in Normandy? It's very pretty, and our grandmother lives there; but she is so old that she can't keep us in winter, because we make too much noise in her room."

"Are we making a noise now, madame?" asked Theresa, anxiously. "Papa said you were sick, and that if we tired you we should not come any more."

"And we are so much amused," cried Genevieve, embracing me energetically.

The cat awakened; he walked around the room uneasily.

“He knows he is not at home,” said the girls, following him in order to tell him the names of the various articles of furniture and the subjects of the pictures. “That’s a little girl who is tired,” said Genevieve, contemplating the Mignon of Amy Sheffer. “She has no cat. If you were there, my Faradet”—and the little animal rubbed his head against his mistress’ shoulder—“she would not look so unhappy.”

But Faradet wanted to reconnoitre the unknown territory by himself. He leaped upon the stand and placed a paw on a wooden ball in my work-basket. “Faradet!” said Theresa, reproachfully. The cat meowed plaintively, as if in protest, but withdrew his paw and descended gently.

“You see how good he is, madame!” exclaimed his delighted mistress.

At this moment the door was opened. “You must come now, mademoiselles,” said Celestine; “monsieur ordered me not to leave you long enough to fatigue madame.”

“Have we remained too long?” The two little faces were turned supplicatingly towards me.

Too long! I looked at the clock. Two

hours had slipped away as a dream. Mothers and children soon understand and learn to love one another.

“I will be greatly obliged to you if you will permit them to come back to-morrow—their father being willing,” I said, turning to the nurse, “and not to disturb you, my maid will take them home, so that it will not be necessary to attend them, mademoiselle.”

Celestine’s bad humor vanished ; she admitted that it might be possible she would be obliged to perform some errands, during which time she would leave her charges in my care. She courtesied, and took the hands of my little friends.

“We are coming again to-morrow,” they said to Faradet, whom they had great trouble to catch.

“Do you want us to bring Raton?” cried Theresa, as the *bonne* shut the door.

“No, no,” I returned quickly. I liked rats even less than white cats.

From that day I had two girls and a cat. As soon as the little sisters were dressed, they ran to the window, sometimes before I had arisen, and they would find my sofa unoccupied. Genevieve mounted a chair, and en-

deavored, with many fruitless efforts, to open the window, in spite of Louise's fears of a downfall. "They both ought to have a whipping," she observed; "the cat will be trying to raise the window next. There it is, open at last."

"Good day!" repeated two fresh little voices, "good day, madame!" Louise had half-opened our window to let the dust out. "Have you slept well? Faradet has been very good!" Louise shut the window, and the children disappeared to make the toilet of their cat.

"I have never seen such an animal," said Louise, stopping her work to look at our neighbors; "he is seated in bed with his night-gown. They are bringing him a dish on a tray"—and my old attendant shook with laughter—"they feed him with a spoon and he swallows like an infant. What is that running along the curtains? Truly, it is the rat; I can't tell how these little girls keep the beasts from eating one another. But I am losing time."

Louise managed to protract the arrangement of my room very greatly since the discovery of our new friends. Each day they made me an early visit. They brought their books and I

commenced to give them lessons. Genevieve could read a little, but Theresa hardly spelled; they wrote a page or two; the elder made o's, while my brunette filled her fingers with ink-spots. In the meantime the cat slept on my knees, happy to be delivered from the constraint imposed by his civilized habits, as his furniture had not been brought into my room.

"We amuse ourselves well enough here," Genevieve had prudently decided; "we must keep something at home."

The dog Ravande and the white rat had not yet been admitted to the honor of paying me a visit; but the most perfect harmony always reigned between the three animals and their mistresses.

"Raton is so glad when we return," said Theresa; he climbs upon the bars of his cage, and utters cries of joy."

I asked what the cries of joy of a rat were. Theresa tried to imitate them. "That's not them at all," said Genevieve, trying in her turn, with the same success as her sister. Whereupon they both rolled on the floor in a transport of laughter, and they were obliged to give up the idea of making me comprehend Raton's expressions of joy.

“We will bring him and you will see,” they promised. I did not remind them of their promise.

I began to grow better. I was soon able to leave my room. I had decided to profit by my liberty, in order to see Mr. Boilou and advise him to discharge Celestine, who neglected his children and was unfit for her position. Although they were much neglected, I had always admired the goodness and sweet temper of my little friends. They were very ignorant for their age, were sometimes hoydenish (with my sons) and sometimes troublesome (with my Louise); but they were kind, good-natured, and docile. I was not astonished at the peace that reigned among their three favorites, for the sisters never quarrelled themselves. I wanted to see my two boys act in like manner; but, although they loved each other with all their hearts, they teased and provoked each other from morning to night.

On Sunday, while awaiting their appearance, I sent for my two little girls. “Tell them,” I said to Louise, “that I wish them to bring Raton and Ravande.”

“And the cat?” added Louise, who had taken Faradet into favor. He helped her, she

avowed, to count her linen by placing its little white paw on each napkin that she added to the pile. When I happened to find the dusky mark of a paw on my table linen, Louise insisted that it was the fault of the washerwoman.

“And Faradet?” she repeated, “Faradet comes, of course.”

A quarter of an hour later my chamber was transformed into a menagerie. In entering, my two boys jostled the dog who lay extended before the door, and Roger knocked against Raton’s cage; the poor little animal, frightened by the shock, took refuge in her bed of hay. His little mistresses had retired to a corner, carrying Faradet.

I had some trouble silencing the low growls of the old dog and the meowing of the cat; peace, however, was at last established. My sons returned to their old employment of teasing each other, while the girls played with their animals at the end of the room. The rat had come from his hiding place to climb up the bars of the cage. Faradet, standing on his hind legs before the cage, made slight strokes at the white claws of the rat, who began his cries of joy, as the girls called them.

“Do you hear him, madame?” said Theresa,

triumphantly. "That doesn't sound like the noise Genevieve made, does it?"

"Nor is it like what you made," laughed the other.

Theresa agreed that it was not, and they called Ravande, who was cosily stretched at full length. Faradet was running hither and thither; he shook Raton's cage in passing, and gave the dog a box on the ear; the latter raised his head good-naturedly. My son Henri was seated on the floor near my sofa. I placed my hand on his shoulder.

"These children and animals can live together without quarrelling," I said in a low tone; "why cannot my sons do as much?"

Roger overheard me. He shook his head like Ravande.

"Little girls," he said disdainfully.

"Animals," added Henri; but his eyes did not leave the happy little group in the corner of the room, and in the evening he embraced me before departing for college and murmured in my ear:

"I will try to become less quarrelsome, dear mother; we can live together as well as a cat and a rat."

I smiled. He had understood the example I had wished to show him.



A CHRISTMAS HYMN.

THERE were three in the O'Meara family, Thomas, his wife, and little Nora. Little Nora was seven years old.

The O'Mearas were poor, and one of them was not contented. This was the husband and father. He had become careless of late, and he did not attend to his religious duties as he had formerly done.

The morning sunlight, shooting its golden arrows into the O'Mearas' little room, saw a very pretty picture.

Little Nora sat by her mother's side, repeating the following hymn :

"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where Our Infant Redeemer is laid,"

"I forget the rest, dear mother," said little

Nora. It has something sweet in it about dewdrops. Please say it again."

And Nora's mother began :

"Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining,
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall"—

"Oh, I remember now," cried Nora, eagerly continuing :

"Angels adore Him, in slumber reclining,
Maker, and Monarch, and Saviour of all."

They were proceeding to the second stanza, when Thomas O'Meara entered.

"Sure, and what's the use of learning the child that?" he said. "She'd better be learning her A B C's. Go and get your primer, Nora, and leave hymns to ould women and them that likes them."

"I like them, father," said Nora, raising her eyes imploringly.

"Do as I bid you."

And Nora obeyed, dampening the well-thumbed primer with her tears.

Thomas O'Meara shortly afterward was discharged by his employer, and he resolved to leave Ireland and go to America.

He had but little money, and he intended to let his wife and child remain in the old

country until he could earn sufficient to pay their passage to the New World.

Well, he started, and Nora wept more tears at his departure than she did about the hymn.

Three months passed, and one joyful day Mrs. O'Meara received a letter from her husband, inclosing a sum of money, and telling her to come at once to him.

As soon as possible, Nora and her mother were on shipboard, speeding over the ocean. The steamer that carried them made a quicker trip than usual. They arrived two days before they were expected.

Thomas O'Meara had promised to meet them at the landing-place, but he was not there.

Anxiously Mrs. O'Meara scanned every face on the wharf—that familiar one was absent.

Sick at heart, she stood, with Nora by her side, waiting for his coming. Every new-comer she fancied to be him, and then with painful disappointment saw that it was not he—the expected one.

As night fell she took refuge in a hotel. Her husband had forgotten to send her any address, but she knew he worked on a farm; so the next morning she left the city, and went out into the open country. She would inquire

for Thomas O'Meara at the different farm-houses. Surely the people would know him. Alas! she did not know what a large place America is.

Her efforts were vain. No one knew him. It was bitter cold — Christmas was near — and Jack Frost pinched poor little Nora's cheeks purple, and almost froze the tears in her blue eyes.

At the end of the third day the snow began to fall, and the mother and daughter found shelter in a deserted tumble-down old barn. Grief and anxiety had done their work. Mrs. O'Meara fell sick with fever. She grew worse, finally becoming delirious.

There was no house in sight. Little Nora was alone with her suffering mother. It was two days since they entered the barn, and during that time they had eaten no food.

Poor little Nora was growing very weak. She pressed her lips to her unconscious mother's hot brow. It was a sad Christmas Eve.

"Poor, dear mother," she thought, "father would let me sing my hymn now, to cheer her up, I know."

She began the hymn in her shrill, childish voice.

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Out on the lonely road sounded the merry jingle of sleigh-bells. Two persons were in the sleigh—the driver and another. The moon shone coldly bright on the far-reaching expanse of snow.

“Hark!” said the driver—it was Thomas O’Meara, and the man by his side was his employer. “Do you not hear a sound, sir?”

“The wind?”

“Sure there’s no wind at all, at all. Listen! D’ye hear that?” O’Meara reined in the horses.

Through the deep stillness of the night came the child’s faltering voice, singing:—

“Cold on His cradle, the dewdrops are shining;
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore Him, in slumber reclining
Maker, and Monarch, and Saviour of all.”

“That’s the voice of an angel, or of my own little Nora!” cried O’Meara.

“The voice comes from yonder barn,” said his employer.

Thomas O’Meara entered the barn, and found his wife and child. They were wrapped up warmly, placed in the sleigh, and taken to the kind employer’s home.

Mrs. O’Meara soon recovered, and Nora’s

cheeks soon grew red again. The steamer had arrived two days before Thomas O'Meara reached the city, to meet his wife and Nora. He was almost frantic at having missed them. He made a vow if he ever should regain his loved ones, he would never more be careless about his religious duties.

He kept that vow. He is prosperous and happy; and on each Christmas Eve, he joins with grateful heart in singing the hymn which he once thought was useless for Nora to learn.





A JUNE DAY.

THE spot in the garden which Jennie and Eddie Garland chose for their play-ground was very pretty. It was not far from their father's house, the roofs of which could be seen above the trees. Here was an open place, where the grass was kept short by the constant tread of their little feet. Here were their little gardens and a tent, over which was unfurled a tiny red, white and blue flag.

Their toys were kept in the tent, and during the long, bright days there were no happier children in the country than these two. Jennie was eight years old and Eddy was four. Jap was their little dog. Nobody seemed to know how old *he* was. He looked to be at least a hundred, although he could not have been so old as that. He followed the children everywhere, and seemed to understand what they said, not only to him, but to each other.

One bright sweet-scented day in June, the

children's mother gave them permission to go into the big garden, which was a tangled mass of roses, magnolias, honeysuckle and sweet-williams. The children were not usually permitted to go into this garden, but on this day their mother said that they might go and gather as many flowers as they liked, because it was the eve of Corpus Christi.

"And children," she said, "I want you to get the prettiest red and white roses you can find for Our Blessed Lord to-morrow."

"May we *really* pick them where we like?" asked Eddie.

"Yes, dear," said his mother, smiling the kind smile that mothers smile for little boys; "but don't pick such very short stems."

"No, mother," answered Eddie.

The children went into the grounds, hand in hand. When they came to their tent, they thought that they would rest awhile before beginning to fill their baskets with roses. Jennie took some of her toys from the tent, and the children soon drowned the hum of the bees, who had a nice hive near, with their laughter and shouts.

Suddenly Jennie "screeched," as Eddie expressed it.

“Oh, dear,” she said, “there’s a bee in my stocking!”

“Take it off quick!”

“Oh, Eddie, it will bite me!”

“Bees don’t bite; they sting,” said Eddie, proudly.

Jennie “screeched,” and, as her stocking was hanging over her shoe—for Jennie was not the tidiest girl in the world—it was easily pulled off. The question now arose, how was Sir Gold Belt to be enticed out of the stocking?

Eddie was in favor of treading on the stocking and killing the bee; but Jennie said it would be wrong to kill a bee.

“It works hard and makes honey, you know.”

“But it might sting somebody else.”

“It may help to make honey for our bread and butter.”

“So it might,” said Eddie, moved by this suggestion.

Jennie shook her stocking violently, threw it on the ground and ran under the cedar tree, Eddie taking refuge in the tent. But no bee buzzed from the stocking.

“I tell you,” the bee won’t come out of the top of the stocking, because it is afraid of us;

I'll cut a hole in the heel of the stocking, and then the bee will drop out."

The stocking was laid on the ground, and Eddie, taking his little pen-knife from his pocket, cut a hole in the heel of the stocking. Breathlessly Jennie shook the stocking. Eddie and Jap watched anxiously for the bee to appear. But no bee came.

"I don't see it," said Jennie.

"I don't, either," said Eddie.

Jap barked, to show that he agreed with them.

"Here it comes! here it comes!" cried Eddie.

Jennie dropped the stocking, and there fell upon the grass a dried clover-top. This was the bee!

Jap turned it over with his nose, with a look of contempt. Eddie laughed, and Jennie began to cry. It was too bad to have cut a hole in her stocking and to have found no bee. What would mamma say?

"You told me to do it, Eddie," she said. "I think it was real mean?"

"Well, why did you 'screech,' anyhow?" asked Eddie, in an injured tone. "I didn't say there was a bee!"

“ You did ! ” said Jennie. “ You said it was a bee ! ”

“ That’s a story ! ” cried Eddie. “ You ought to be ashamed of yourself. ”

“ I’m ashamed of you ! ”

Eddie began to cry, too, and Jap to yelp in sympathy. The children were very angry with each other. They picked up their baskets and went into the tangled garden.

The fragrance of the honeysuckle and the roses surrounded them. Above was the deep blue sky, and all around the sunlit air. Climbing, but scentless roses, wreathed the trunks of old trees and summer-house. Bushes bearing sweet, rich red roses stood everywhere ; above them towered white roses, and here and there a yellow rose lifted its face to the sun. The lilac-bushes had lost their delicious burdens ; but the scent of the honeysuckle more than made up for the loss of the fragrance of the purple and white lilacs.

In one place a red rose-bush, covered with magnificent flowers, whose golden hearts shone among the unfolded petals, had become entwined with a white rose-bush, whose flowers, half-opened, seemed without a spot.

Jennie stretched out her hand to take one of

the white roses, uttering an exclamation of pleasure.

“You mustn’t do that!” said Eddie.

“Why not?” asked Jennie.

“Because mamma said it was no use plucking roses for the altar and offering them to Our Dear Lord, if we had bad thoughts in our hearts. Mamma said that the child Jesus wants our hearts first, and after that, the flowers. You mustn’t offer Him white roses when you are angry with me!”

Jennie tore the rose from the bush and threw it on the ground. “You’re a mean boy, Eddie!”

Eddie picked up the rose. “Mamma said that the white roses meant the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Mother and the red ones the Heart of Our Lord. You ought not to treat them so!”

An angry flash came into Jennie’s eyes, and she raised her hand as if to hit her little brother. It was hard to be reproved by *him*.

Then her Guardian Angel whispered in her ear. She kissed the torn rose and Eddie, and her tears glistened like dew-drops in the white petals.

“I am sorry to have offended the dear Child

Jesus and His Blessed Mother." She made an Act of Contrition.

After this the day went happily, and their mother smiled and kissed them when they came home at dinner-time, loaded with the rarest roses in the garden—all with long stems!"





WILDE BY NAME AND WILD BY NATURE.

AUNT MARTHA was very strict—very strict. It must be said, though, that she had reason to be, for Kitty Wilde, her niece, was, as all the neighbors said, “Wilde by name and wild by nature.” She was an orphan, and she had been taken by Aunt Martha when she was very young. Aunt Martha was not really her aunt. She was a “lone woman,” whose son had gone West long ago, and sometimes she said to the neighbors that “she didn’t know what had possessed her to take Kitty Wilde.” Kitty was sometimes very trying to Aunt Martha.

Anybody’s nerves would be shocked by the sight of Kitty clinging to Brindle’s horns riding around the East Meadow. Brindle was one of Aunt Martha’s three cows. This was one of Kitty’s amusements. She was always very

sorry, after she had been told how dangerous and annoying it was, but the next day she generally forgot her sorrow, and rode Brindle again.

Aunt Martha generally had "company" on Friday nights, because the sweeping, the washing and the baking were over. The "company" generally was three old ladies from West Hampton, the town about three miles away. They were very stiff, prim old ladies, and they always drove over in an ancient carriage—a "Germantown," they called it. Suddenly, while they and Aunt Martha were drinking tea, and exchanging cooking receipts and the news of the neighborhood, a wild howl would sound without, and when the four frightened old ladies would hasten to the door, they would see the "Germantown" dashing down the road, driven by Kitty at a break-neck pace. This was not pleasant, and took away the old ladies' appetites for Aunt Martha's nice tea-cakes.

Several times when Aunt Martha had sent Kitty, with her pitcher, to the spring behind the house, where all day long in the hottest summer, the coldest water bubbled up, she had been found idly gazing into the brook, trying wreaths of daisies on her head or making paper-boats!

Was it strange that Aunt Martha declared, over and over again, that she would go mad? The neighbors declared "they didn't see how she stood it."

It was agreed everywhere that Kitty was good-hearted; she never refused to do an act of kindness. Farmer Birch, the richest man in the neighborhood, had been so grateful to her for her kindness to his little son, who had been hurt by a reaping machine, that he told her she might have the whole produce of his big ox-heart cherry-tree for the gathering.

Kitty picked the cherries every summer, and sold them to a dealer in West Hampton. Aunt Martha would never touch the "cherry money." Kitty carried it to the bank every year. It was something for a "rainy day."

Aunt Martha loved Kitty very much, and Kitty returned the love with interest. She worked with energy in fits and starts. And she *could* work, when she wanted to; but she did not always want to.

Aunt Martha would have stood everything, except for Kitty's dislike to "meeting." Aunt Martha was a Methodist, and she wanted Kitty to be a Methodist.

Twice Kitty went to meeting. After that, she

would not go again. She said the preaching and the shouting frightened her.

“Shouting!” cried Aunt Martha indignantly. “*You* shout from morning until night, and you don’t seem to care. You wicked, wicked child! I don’t know where you are going when you die!”

“I can’t help it, Aunt Martha,” said Kitty, tying a new ribbon around the cat’s neck; “your hymns are so sorrowful and everybody is so grim, that I wouldn’t be a Methodist. It’s not what *I* call religion.”

“Sister Briggs, do you hear the child?” cried Aunt Martha, turning to the “company” seated at the tea-table. “Give me my cap-ribbon this instant! How can you put it on that nasty cat? It cost two fips a yard!—Do you hear her? How can she expect a change of heart?”

Sister Briggs shook her head, swallowed her tea and sang in doleful tones:—

“There was a girl whom I know well,
 She went unto a ball,
 Full knowing ’twas the road to Hell,—
 Oh, it was awful,
 Awful, Awful,
 Oh, it was awful,
 A — a — a — full!”

Kitty ran away before the pious Mrs. Briggs could finish a doleful ditty very fashionable among the Methodists of the neighborhood.

The four old ladies shook their heads.

“I don’t see whatever possessed you to take Kitty Wilde,” said Mrs. Briggs, “she’s a bold, good-for-nothing —”

Aunt Martha straightened herself up and peered at Mrs. Briggs through her spectacles.

“I am able to attend to my own business, Sister Briggs.”

“Oh, indeed!” said Sister Briggs. “I thought you were too much of a Christian to take offence when a neighbor gives a word of advice. But I guess, if you saw your Kitty tearing around the country with the Irish children back of the hill, you wouldn’t be so touchy. Them Irish will make a Jesuit of her, if you don’t be careful.”

Aunt Martha put down her tea-cup.

“Law sakes!” the other members of the company exclaimed.

“You’re not in earnest, Sister Briggs? You don’t mean to tell me that Kitty associates with that Irish family?”

“I saw her with these eyes picking blackberries with Rose and Anna O’Rafferty to-day.”

Aunt Martha was silent. This was a heavy blow.

The country around East Hampton was peopled almost exclusively by "natives," whose great-grandfathers had come mostly from the North of England. A colony of Irish people had lately settled among them, who, though very poor, had managed to build a chapel, in which a priest said Mass twice a month. Rose and Anna O'Rafferty were of this colony. Their father was a hard-working carpenter, and an admirable man, quite as well educated as the people among whom his lot had been cast. Nevertheless, he was looked down upon by his neighbors; and Rose and Anna were considered by the other girls as "Irish." In East Hampton this word meant everything that was low and coarse.

It was a blow, then, for Aunt Martha to hear that Kitty Wilde had "made friends" with the O'Rafferty girls. She had nothing to say against them; but they were "Irish."

She was about to open her mouth to reply to the last remark, when a scream rang through the air and caused the old ladies to jump from the table in terror.

Before they could leave the table, the door

of the room was thrown open and Kitty entered, followed by two dripping figures. One was Rose O'Rafferty, her frock tightly clinging to her, and the water from it trickling in little streams. She led a boy named Willie Newcomb by the hand. He was a pitiable object. His hair was matted with mud, which had run into his eyes, and from thence been smeared over his face. His clothes were literally "soaked."

Willie Newcomb was Mrs. Brigg's grandson, and the apple of her eye. She seemed too amazed to speak. Kitty burst out:

"Oh, Aunt Martha, Willie called Rose ugly names, and said he wouldn't play with her, and I got mad, and I chased him, and he lost his balance and fell into the creek. *I* thought he was going to drown, when Rose jumped in after him. She can swim a little, you know, and just as I thought they were both dead, she caught a branch and pulled him out. O, dear, it was awful! The nasty, disagreeable boy!"

All this was delivered so rapidly that Aunt Martha made Kitty say it over again.

"I wouldn't have saved him, that's all," she added. "Why, he said his grandmother Briggs said Rose worshipped idols."

Mrs. Briggs looked very much ashamed; but everybody else pretended not to notice this remark.

Willie was put to bed at once, and Rose safely ensconced in Kitty's room, much to the latter's delight.

When quiet was restored, Aunt Martha and her friends resumed their meal. Her brow was wrinkled, and she looked anxious.

"I am shocked by Kitty's unchristian sentiments towards poor Willie. She actually declares she would have let him drown. When I asked Rose, who seems to be a sweet child, why she risked her life, she said: 'Oh, our Lord wants us to do good to them that injure us.'"

"And she a Romanist!" cried the old ladies.

"Well, for my part," said Mrs. Briggs, "I'll never say anything against 'em again!"

Aunt Martha was so much impressed by Rose's action that she let Kitty go to Mass and the Catechism class with her, and people say that Aunt Martha herself has a "leaning towards Rome."



THE BOY WHO WANTED TO BE OLD.

WALTER went into the library one day, and found it empty. His grandfather's big chair, with several books on it, stood near the table. Walter lifted off some of the books and climbed into the chair. Then he took his grandfather's long Dutch pipe and began to read. I mean to pretend to read, for Walter could not read. He did not touch the pen or ink, for Walter was an obedient boy. He took the end of the pipe out of his mouth very soon, for he found "it tasted nasty."

After awhile, Walter dropped asleep, and his grandfather coming in, awakened him.

"Oh, grandfather," he said, "I dreamed that I was you. How nice it must be, to be you! You can read every word in this big book and do as you please!"

"I don't often read Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' and when I do, I have to use spec-

tales. Now, you can see everything without spectacles. See what an advantage you have."

"Oh, but, grandpapa, you can do *anything* you please. You can ride a pony."

"No," said grandfather, smiling, "I can't; I have the rheumatism."

Walter was silent. "But I wish I were old, grandfather; I would be independent of everybody."

"No, you wouldn't; nobody is independent. Now I am too old to do anything useful. I have to depend on others for many things."

"Then, it is better fun to be young and little after all."

Grandfather smiled. "Most people think so."

"Would you like to be young and little, like me?"

"No," said grandfather, "I am content to be old and feeble; I have lived a long time; God has been very good to me, and I hope soon to join in praising Him in Heaven, if he thinks me worthy, after purifying my soul in Purgatory."

"Grandfather, I would like to be old like you to feel that way."

"No, Walter, be content; be as good as you

can ; do your best every hour of your life. That will make you as happy as any man can be outside of Heaven."

Walter kissed his grandfather, and they spent a pleasant afternoon together.





THE LAST MEETING OF THE T. I. & B. B. E.'S.

“WHO goes there?”

“Me.”

“That’s not grammar!”

“Yes, it is!”

“No, it isn’t!”

“I say it is!”

“My teacher says it isn’t.”

“What ought it to be, then?”

“I.”

“But the pass-word is ‘Raw heads and bloody bones!’”

“Pass in!”

This dialogue took place between Harry Jones and John McDermott. Harry was holding up one side of his father’s cellar-door. In the cellar an important meeting was about to take place. Against a barrel of potatoes was propped up a chair with three legs. On this

chair sat the captain of the T. I. and B. B. E.'s. His jacket was turned inside out, so was his cap. He held a broom-stick in one hand; and there were three splashes of red brick-dust on his face and hands.

Around him, grouped in a circle, were five other boys, each with his coat or jacket turned inside out, but with no red paint on and no broom-stick. The boy with these distinctions was the captain of the T. I. and B. B. E.'s. He was a very generous fellow. Previous to John McDermott's entrance, he had passed around a very small green apple and permitted each boy to take a bite from it. His name was Al Smith. He said he had once killed a snake. His father was a policeman. These qualities made him much respected by the T. I. and B. B. E.'s.

"Hail, brother!" all the T. I. and B. B. E.'s cried out as John McDermott entered.

"What bring'st thou to the banquet?" demanded the captain, chewing the core of his apple, which had just been given to him. John pulled out of his pocket a link of Bologna sausage, and held it up triumphantly before the conclave. A cry of delight was given by the T. I. and B. B. E.'s.

“ 'Tis well,” said the captain. “ Shall we feast? Would that this were the blood of the savage red-skin !” he cried, wrinkling his nose ferociously. “ Ha ! Ha ! ”

“ Give the captain the first bite ! ” said Harry Jones.

The sausage was solemnly presented to the captain, who bit off the end. Then the owner had his share, and so on. The next comer admitted was Pat Brady, a fat boy with twinkling eyes.

“ Hast thou brought a scalp, or perchance the bloody limb of some r-r-r-r-roamer of the for-r-r-r-est ? ”

“ Not much, me noble duke,” said Pat. “ There was no red-skin on Broadway this morning, or I should have torn him limb from limb ! ”

“ There speaks a true T. I. & B. B. E.” cried the captain, smearing more brick-dust on his hands, and lighting a “ smoker.”

“ Ma said we wern't to have any matches,” cried Harry Jones. “ I don't think it's fair to come into a fellow's cellar and smoke ‘ smokers ’. I won't play ! ”

“ Play ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! ” said the captain of the T. I. and B. B. E.'s, in a sepulchral voice.

“Is this play? Wistest thou, rash youth, that to-morrow we start on the road towards the forest? Every brave will have at least ten cents in his pocket and a basket of provisions. We go forth to the wilds of Jersey. There we will slay — aye, slay, — until the earth becomes as crimson as this gor-r-r-r-e upon me ar-r-r-m.”

The T. I. and B. B. E.’s trembled, while the august captain waved his broom-stick.

“What are we going to do?” demanded Pat Brady. “Hunt mosquitoes in Jersey?”

“Ha! ha! dost hear him, brethren of the T. I. and B. B. E.’s?”

“We do!”

“Know, then, rash intruder, that we have sworn to drive the red-skin from the soil. You have read of Pawnee Bob, the slayer of the Piutes?”

“Don’t read dime novels,” said Pat.

“Maybe,” continued the captain, “you have not heard of Old Sleuth?”

“No,” said Pat.

“Well, I am about to lead you all in the paths of these great men. I—but what has our new brother brought to the cause of the T. I. and B. B. E.’s, with which to feast our souls? No raw sweet potatoes will be accepted.”

Pat suddenly drew out of his pocket a big live crab. He threw it on the floor. It acted as live crabs usually acted, and the T. I. and B. B. E.'s yelled, scrambled over one another, and scattered Mrs. Jones' ash-kettles right and left.

The captain fell from his throne and sprawled on the floor. Suddenly a voice was heard on the stairs —

“You Harry!”

A silence fell on the T. I. and B. B. E.'s. The captain rose and disappeared through the cellar-door. The other T. I. and B. B. E.'s scrambled after him. Pat Brady was dragged up the ladder, because he clung to the last boy's coat tail.

Mrs. Jones was astonished to find the cellar empty.

“I say, fellows,” cried Pat, when they reached the street, “you're nice Terrible Indian and Big Buffalo Exterminators, when you're A. O. C. A. A. W.”

“What do you mean?” cried the captain.

“I mean that you'd better give up reading dime novels and talking nonsense about Indian fighting, when you're afraid of a crab and a woman!”

The T. I. and B. B. E.'s were quiet.

“You’re right, Pat,” said the captain.
“Let’s drop dime novels and story papers.
They’ll never make men of us.”

And the T. I. and B. B. E.'s took the captain’s advice.





A DAY AT RIDGEWOOD.

[T was comfortable and warm and cheerful inside. A bright fire burned in the grate. Grandmother sat at one side of the fire with her knitting, Aunt Frances at the other, making a little cap for Baby.

The four children, Lousia and Ellen, and their cousins, Jack and Willie, were not so content with the pleasant room as the other people were. Snow had begun to fall, at first slowly, then quickly, with many a whirl. The passers-by turned up their collars, and trudged along. But somehow or other, the coming of the snow seemed to make everybody outside more cheerful.

Jack and Willie left their building blocks and went to the window.

After awhile, only a few white feathers fell, slowly and reluctantly. Then the boys, with brooms and shovels, began to ring bells and

knock at doors. "Want your pavements cleaned off?"

Jack and Willie looked longingly at these boys at work.

"Why can't *we* go out and shovel snow?"

"Why can't *we*?"

The boys asked this question first, and the girls imitated them. Grandmother was shocked.

"Go out on a day like this! No, indeed! Did they want to get their feet wet?"

"But we have good strong shoes!" cried the children, "and Ellen and Louisa have rubber boots!"

"I don't think they ought to go, do you, Frances?" asked Grandmother.

"Well," said Aunt Frances, "I think you might let them go. It is very jolly outside. I'd like to go myself, if it were not for the fact that it would look queer to see *me* making snow-balls."

"May we go?"

"Do let us go!"

"We'll be *so* good, Grandmother!"

"Oh, *do* come, Aunt Frances!"

After a great many exclamations and entreaties, Grandmother at last consented, making all kinds of stipulations.

Sleigh-bells sounded. The children rushed to the window. A big, rough, board-sleigh passed, crowded with laughing children.

“Oh, how happy they must be!” cried Aunt Frances; “I would like to have a sleigh-ride myself!”

“I wish *we* could!”

“Here comes another sleigh!”

Gracefully turning the corner, like a swan floating on a lake, came a beautifully curved sleigh, big and comfortable-looking.

The man who drove was heavily muffled in furs. The children could not see his face. Suddenly the sleigh was stopped at the door; and the driver ran up their steps—actually *their* steps.

The children looked at one another in breathless expectation. Who could it be?

Aunt Frances smiled. She guessed who it was.

The door of the parlor opened, and a gentleman entered. He raised the visor of his fur cap, and kissed them all, except Aunt Frances.

“Walter, oh, Walter!”

Walter was very jolly.

“I’ve come to take you all out to Ridgewood,” he said. “The sleigh will be rather

crowded, but you will not mind that, will you? We'll have something to eat at the hotel, so you needn't wait for luncheon, and the children can make monstrous snow-balls on the side of the hill."

Grandmother would not go. Aunt Frances seemed delighted, and there was a great scramble for coats and hats, scarfs and gloves.

Finally, everybody was helped into the sleigh, and nearly smothered in buffalo robes. How happy they all were!

"Get up!" The whip cracked; the bells jingled. "Hooray!" cried the boys cleaning the pavements. "Hooray!"

They passed the little church, whose golden cross gleamed bright against the blue sky. Father Redmond was just entering his house, and he waved his hand to them. They all cried out, "Good morning, Father!" in return.

They crossed the car-tracks, passed the big car-stables, rode through the Park as quickly as the driving-rules would let them, and they were soon in the open country. They met a young man on a bicycle, making tracks through the snow. It seemed very funny; but the young man had a hard time ploughing along.

Jack said that winter bicycles ought to be made with runners.

Walter said that the proper pronunciation of the word was “bi-*cy*-cle, with the accent on the ‘cy.’” Everybody laughed at Walter, and Aunt Frances said that, although it might do in Greek, it would not do in English.

The children thought this very witty. So did Walter, who laughed very much, which induced Aunt Frances to say other lively things, which sent the children into convulsions. They wanted to laugh.

They stopped to get a bunch of red berries which showed above the snow, and Aunt Frances got out to pick up a half-frozen robin, which she laid carefully in the pocket of her fur wrap.

The air was fresh; the sky all blue and gold; the bells jingled lightly; and Walter, finding the country was very quiet, and there was nobody to listen, began to sing:—

“The robin in his leafy tent
Sings all day long and is content,
He does not have to pay his rent,
He! he! he! he! he! he!”

The children screamed with delight. Walter could not reach a high note, and his voice broke. Then there was more delight, and Aunt Frances cried:—

“Hear, hear, hear, hear,
Hear the horses neighing,
See, see, see, see,
See the children playing,
We, we, we, we,
We all go a-sleighing,
Jing, jing, jing, jing!”

The children joined in this chorus with a will; they were still singing when Walter stopped the horses at Ridgewood Hotel.

It was a long wooden building, with a porch running around it. It was perched on the top of a hill.

The merry party were met by the landlady at the door.

“Come in,” she said, cheerfully. “Come in; dinner’s almost ready, sir,” she said to Walter. “I got your note, and I made apple-dumplings for dessert, as you said.”

The children were charmed. They liked apple-dumplings.

In another minute they were out again in the snow, rolling up a big snow-ball. The whole four pushed it up hill with all their might. It grew bigger and bigger.

“Isn’t it *lovely!*” cried the girls.

They pushed and pushed. Jack stumbled and fell on his face. They all laughed.

Jack grumbled, and asked, "How would you like it, if I laughed at you?"

They laughed louder, and pushed again. The snow-ball grew bigger and bigger. They were near the top of the hill. Jack thought he saw a bird's nest in the snow. He went to get it, but it was only some dried leaves. Just as he turned, Louisa fell, and the big snow-ball rolled over her, knocking down Ellen and Willie. It did not stop till it reached the bottom of the hill. Aunt Frances and Walter stood on the porch, laughing.

"How do *you* like it, now?" said Jack, as the other children picked themselves up, and brushed the snow from their clothes.

"I'll never laugh again at a boy when he is down," said Willie. "I know how it is."

"And I think it's very nice of Jack not to laugh at us," said Ellen.

The dinner was good ; everything was "just right ;" and the drive home was the best of all that happened on the ever-to-be-remembered day at Ridgewood.



GRACE COURT.

THEY called the place Grace Court. It contained about twenty-two houses. It was near a great river, but the houses were so high that in the hot days of summer scarcely a breath of air stirred the clothes which hung from the lines stretched across from house to house.

Occasionally the children in Grace Court saw a city sparrow, and in one corner of the court there was a stunted mulberry-tree. They had no other glimpses of the wonders of the country than these. The boys sometimes, in the summer evenings, went to swim in the river; and their principal amusement was in avoiding the policemen who objected to their jumping off anchor-chains and barges at the risk of their lives.

On summer nights the sight of many poor women and children sitting on the door-steps

and pavements and gasping for air was very wretched.

Nearly all the women and children in Grace Court worked at cigar-making. The men found employment along the wharves. But many of the men drank too much and helped to make their wives and children unhappy.

It happened that some of the people in Grace Court were Catholics. Good Father Beresford, rector of the chapel of the Star of the Sea, saw their wretchedness, and did what he could to help them. It was hard for him to get the children to come to Mass or to the Catechism class. They had, as a rule, no "Sunday clothes," and some of their mothers, although they had not enough pride in their children to wash their faces, had too much to permit them to go to church without new bonnets and frocks. Few of these children went to school. They were needed at home to make cigars.

Father Beresford and all his flock were very poor. It occurred to him that if he could interest some kind people in his colony in Grace Court, he would be able to improve their condition. They needed so much that he could not give them. His heart was sore

when he thought of them. He had established a school, but it was hard to fill it. Two good Sisters of Charity taught the children that came. Their parents had so much need of them at home, that even these were often absent.

It occurred to Father Beresford that if he could start a night-school and make it attractive, he could induce a great many children to come. But he had no money, and there was nobody to teach at night. The Sisters were willing to undertake this new work, but Father Beresford would not hear of that. After teaching all day in a close room, they ought not to think of renewing their labors in the evening. In this emergency, Father Beresford could only ask the Sisters to pray for him and his work.

In the meantime his heart sunk whenever he passed through Grace Court. The parents seemed to be hardened in vice. If he could only reach the children, there might be some hope for the fathers and mothers.

.

One afternoon in the spring he entered the school-room. It was late in March, and one of those spring showers that are the heralds of

April was beginning to pelt the sidewalks. There was only one little girl in the school-room. She was a little creature with a sweet, thoughtful face, and dark-blue eyes that lost their far-away look only when some sudden sound startled her. She seemed very nervous. She paused in her task and leaned her chin upon the frame of her slate as Father Beresford entered the room.

“You are late, Sister Rose,” he said to the teacher. “And, Mary, I am surprised to see you here. ‘Kept in,’ I suppose.”

Mary did not look ashamed. She only pressed her chin harder against her slate, and answered—

“I like to be ‘kept in.’”

Sister Rose smiled a little. “She is not a bad child, Father; she gets along very well until school is about to close; then she misspells a word or makes a failure in her arithmetic lesson.”

At this moment a knock sounded at the door.

“Come in!” said Father Beresford.

A boy and an old woman dressed in black entered. The boy was about fifteen years of age. He bowed politely to Father Beresford and Sister Rose.

“Pardon me,” he said; “the rain came up so suddenly that I took the liberty of knocking at this door.”

“Afraid of getting wet?”

“No, Father,” answered the boy, with a slight flush on his cheeks; “I was afraid that my mother might get wet.”

“I hope that your mother will sit down and rest awhile.”

The lady, who did not seem so old when she drew aside her veil, thanked Father Beresford.

“The school is open later than usual, because this little girl likes to be ‘kept in.’”

The old lady turned towards the little girl.

“That is very strange, Father,” she said; “I thought little girls liked to get out of school as soon as they could.”

“I don’t,” answered the little girl. “I like to stay here with Sister Rose. Sister Rose does not scold. There is nobody cross here. I like to be here.”

Father Beresford sighed. He knew very well why little Mary Thorn liked to be “kept in;” and so did Sister Rose. But the visitors did not.

“What a funny little girl!” said the boy.

“Why do you like to be ‘kept in?’” asked the lady.

The little girl said, “I like it.”

“I am Mrs. Wisby. This is my son Robert, Father. As we have recently moved into your parish, I think you ought to know us. My husband, who has just died, left me the old house near White’s wharves; and as I am not rich and nobody will rent it of me I occupy it myself.”

“You are a Catholic.”

“Oh, yes.”

The priest, all of whose thoughts were intent upon Grace Court, thought, “I wonder if she could help me?”

The widow’s face flushed. She seemed to guess his thought.

“I am in very moderate circumstances,” she said. “I have to be very careful. I often wish I could do some good, but I can’t.”

Father Beresford looked at her gravely, —
“I am not rich, Sister Rose is not rich.”

“But you are rich in grace.”

Father Beresford continued: —

“If you have any curiosity to know why this child likes to be ‘kept in,’ go home with her.”

“ Perhaps her parents might object — ”

“ Not at all. Go home with her ; and if — having found out why she does not like to go home, as happier children do — you can do her any good, let me know.”

“ I will. Come, Robert ; come, little girl. Good-by, Sister Rose.”

Little Mary Thorn reluctantly put down her slate, pencil, and sponge, and followed Mrs. Wisby and her son.

.
Grace Court was not far off. Mrs. Wisby talked pleasantly to the little girl as they walked along, and Robert told a little story about a lame robin his mother had taken care of all winter. Mary listened ; but only said : —

“ I wish I lived away — far away, where there are robins.”

In a short time they reached the dirty flight of stone steps leading to Grace Court. Once within the narrow street without any outlet which formed the court, they paused at a dark-colored door ornamented with chalk-marks and deep cuts in the wood-work. Mary led the way up stairs. It was a dark way, and Mrs. Wisby was prevented by Robert from stumbling several times.

Loud talking could be heard on almost all the landings, and the angry voices of scolding mothers were very loud. At last, when Mrs. Wisby was entirely out of breath, Mary stopped before a door on the highest landing. She turned the knob nervously. The room was full of smoke. A woman was frying meat in a pan over the fire. She turned to Mary, dropped the pan and exclaimed : —

“ You idle vagabond, I’ll break every bone in your body ! ”

Mrs. Wisby interfered. It was plain that the woman had been drinking too much liquor from the black bottle that stood near the hearth.

“ She is my aunt,” says Mary. “ She is always this way ; so is *he*.”

Mrs. Wisby noticed for the first time that a man lay on the uncarpeted floor.

“ We’ve taken this orphan in and done for her,” the woman said, “ but she’s idle. She don’t want to make cigars, like the other children in the court. She likes to go to the Papist school around the corner. But her uncle and I won’t have it any more. She’s got to give up the school next week.”

Mary began to cry.

“I can’t, I can’t!” she sobbed. “I help you all I can, and you said I might go to school.”

“No matter what I said,” cried the woman in a fury. “I’ll have no more idleness. If the priest hadn’t come here and over-persuaded me, I should never have let you go. I don’t see what you mean by bringing these strangers here. I suppose they brought tracts and Bibles with them.”

“Father Beresford sent me,” said Mrs. Wisby, “to see if I could do you any good.”

“Of course you can,” replied the woman, with a coarse laugh. “Just give me enough money for a quart of whiskey. Go get the pitcher, Mary.”

“No, I cannot do that,” said Mrs. Wisby.

“Then get out o’ here!” cried the woman.

The man on the floor grunted like a pig.

“Come, Robert.”

They descended the stairs, followed by oaths and curses.

At the foot of the stairs little Mary pulled Mrs. Wisby’s dress.

“Oh, ma’am,” she whispered nervously, “*don’t*, don’t let them take me away from the school. *Dont*, *don’t*. I shall die if they do!”

.

Robert was a thoughtful boy.

The death of his father had caused his mother to bear upon him more than mothers do upon their sons.

“I wish I were rich,” sighed Mrs. Wisby, as they left Grace Court. “I wish we could do something; but I’m afraid we can’t. Poor little girl! such a home. Dear, dear, what can we do, Rob?”

“A great deal,” answered Robert, “a great deal, little mother.”

“What? Father Beresford has failed.”

“Because Father Beresford has nobody in his parish to help him.”

“It is hopeless, Robert.”

Robert was silent until his mother set to work to get tea in the cosy little sitting-room of their big house, which had been so long deserted.

Robert loved the evenings spent with his mother. His days were spent in an office up-town, where he was studying law.

“We have too much room here, mother,” he said, as he helped himself to one of his mother’s poached eggs, and, looking at the bright lamp, the pretty red curtains, and the well-spread table, thought of poor little Mary.

“Yes,” answered his mother ; “the big front parlor is more like a barn than a room. If I could afford to have it done, I should turn it into a store.”

“I think I shall open a school.”

“Robert, Robert !”

“Yes. I have heard that Father Beresford sees how hopeless it is to get working children to go to school on week-days, and that he wants to start a night-school. They will not go to the Catechism class on Sunday, because they have no clothes.”

“But you can’t help that.”

“Just a minute, mother. Half the children are made sick by the unhealthy work of cigar-making. I want to teach them something else to do, as well as their religion. Will you let me have the use of the parlor?”

“You have no time, Robert.”

“At night.”

“But our evenings — our pleasant evenings !”

“We’ll have to give them up, mother, for God’s sake.”

Mrs. Wisby sighed. The evenings with her son were very dear to her. But she felt that if any good could be done, she ought to give them up.

Father Beresford was pleased when Robert came to him with his plan.

“My dear boy,” he said, “if you could teach these children to use their hands in any way that will help them to earn a living, you will remove a great obstacle from my way. Cigar-making injures the health of the children, particularly as it is done in close, filthy rooms. If I had a big room, if I could afford to employ somebody to teach the boys and girls any craft by which they earn a little, I could teach them what I please. Their parents want them to earn money as soon as they can walk. Some of them badly need this money. They are not all so bad as little Mary Thorn’s people. If I could only reach the children, I could soon touch the parents. Most of the children who are permitted to go to school at all go to the public school. They don’t learn religion there, and they learn very little at home.”

Robert’s plan was this. He had heard that day that the confectioner had ordered ten thousand imitation Easter eggs, but, although it wanted only three weeks of the great festival, he had not been able to find anybody who would take the control for decorating them.

“He knew my father well,” said Robert, “and that is the way I came to hear of it. He supplies little pictures which the decorator pastes on. But some of the eggs are really painted. These, of course, we could not take until some of the children have learned to paint a flower or a butterfly. But, Father,” continued Robert, “my mother and I will try to teach them in the evenings.”

The priest's face flushed with pleasure.

“You can try!”

Robert rushed off to the confectioner's at once. The matter was soon settled. The confectioner even advanced some money. Next day the great pile of hard, stony eggs stood in Mrs. Wisby's barn-like drawing-room. The carpet had been taken up long ago. There was a stove there, plenty of light, and all the benches from the school.

Father Beresford soon made the people of Grace Court understand that money was to be made in this new kind of school. Sister Rose and Sister Bridget taught prayers, hymns, and the catechism, with a little reading, writing, and arithmetic, while the children busily pasted pictures on the false eggs.

Before Easter Sunday all the decorated eggs

were delivered, much to the satisfaction of everybody. The children of Grace Court were healthier, better, and happier. In the meantime Robert had secured a large contract for decorating Christmas boxes.

Mrs. Wisby's evening classes were successes. Mary Thorn showed herself so quick and careful that she was soon promoted to be best among the decorators.

And thus the industrial school helped everybody. It was the beginning of a great change in Grace Court.





WHAT THEY FOUND IN THE COUNTRY.

I.

THEIR names were Rose, Cecilia, and Anna; and, as their mother never approved of “nicknames,” they were called Rose, Cecilia, and Anna.

They were much alike in appearance, having light-colored hair, worn long, bright blue eyes, and sweet voices.

They were city children, and were thought to be a little “old-fashioned,” because they had lived so much with their mother, who was an invalid, and had become more quiet and subdued than little girls usually are.

The winter had been long and dreary, for Mrs. Desmond, their mother, had not been out of bed since the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and it was now April. In the morn-

ing, they went into their mother's room, and she read their lessons with them. After that they were thrown on their own resources, but so anxious were they about their dear mother, that they scarcely dared play for fear of disturbing her.

One day the doctor said to Mrs. Desmond :

“The three little Palefaces ought to get out more.”

“Palefaces.” repeated Mrs. Desmond.

“The children — I mean the children, of course.”

“Are their faces pale?” asked the mother, in alarm. “I have not noticed it.”

“That is because you see them so often. Seriously, the children are quite bleached after their winter in this house of sickness. Can't you send them into the country?”

“I have nobody to send them with. Poor, little children! If their father were alive, they would be so much happier!”

“Send for Aunt Susan.”

“It is too early in the season. They will catch cold in April.”

“Country children do not catch cold. They will be sick if you do not let them have exercise in the open air. Send for Aunt Susan, and consult her.”

And the doctor, who was an old friend of the family, took his leave.

II.

Rose sat at the piano practising and counting “one *and* two *and* three.” Cecilia was crying softly to herself over a seam which *would* go crooked, and which nobody in the house had time to set right. Anna was deep in her Catechism.

“Oh, play your piece!” said Cecilia, “It may make us feel more lively.”

Rose laughed. “More lively! I’ve played it so often I think it ought to make you gloomy.”

“Well,” said Anna, the very little girl, “let us pretend that it is a new piece.”

“Making believe” had great charms for the children. Rose began her “piece,” “The Maiden’s Prayer.”

“How beautiful,” exclaimed Cecilia, very gravely. “What is the name of that lively piece?”

“The Young Lady’s Aspirations.”

“Oh, Rose,” cried Anna, “you know it is ‘The Maiden’s Prayer.’”

“But I am ‘making believe.’ Besides a young lady is a maiden, and a prayer is an aspiration. Mamma told me so.”

Cecilia and Anna were both struck by Rose’s ingenuity.

“You are the cleverest one of this family,” said Cecilia; “Anna is the prettiest, and I have no talent. I can’t even get my seam straight,” Cecilia said, in a tearful tone.

“Dear, dear Cecilia!” cried Rose, putting her arms around her sister, “You always know your lessons, you know you do!”

“I don’t want to be pretty,” said Anna. “If Cecilia’s ugly, I’m ugly. Everybody says we’re alike as two peas.”

“Ah, yes,” said Cecilia, refusing to be comforted, “but you have one tooth out in front. It makes you look so ‘cute.’”

This settled the matter. It was admitted that Anna was the prettiest of the family — a compliment which she rejected with disgust.

After a pause Rose looked out to the rain-wet street, and wished mamma would let them have pet names for one another.

“I don’t.” said Cecilia, emphatically.

“It would be lovely. ‘Rosie’ is prettier than ‘Rose.’ ‘Annie’ is sweeter than ‘Anna.’”

“Don’t!” said Cecilia, beginning to cry again.

“Why, Cecilia!”

“Don’t!”

“What are you crying for, silly?” asked Rose, indignantly.

“I knew you would call me ‘Silly.’ You two could have pet names, but I couldn’t. You would be sure to call Cecilia ‘Silly’ for short.

It was plain that Cecilia was in a mournful mood. Nothing pleased her. She objected to Anna’s murmuring of her catechism lesson.

These three little girls, having been left so much to themselves, had come to consider their feelings, wants, and occupations as more important than anything else in the world. They were growing more selfish every day. They loved their mother devotedly, but their mother never exacted anything from them. They had no interest outside of themselves. They were kind, good-hearted children in the main, they had never known the privations of the poor, and they considered that there were no children in the world worse off than they

were. Cecilia was of a more melancholy disposition than the others. Her chief occupation, particularly on rainy days, was to compare her shortcomings and misfortunes with the advantages of her sisters, or the people who passed by the windows of their play-room. Cecilia envied the children who ran through the streets in the rain. And she often wished she was one of the poor, ragged children they saw at Mass. *They* had no scales to practice; *their* mothers were not shut up in dark rooms upstairs; *their* sisters were not so much better than they were; *they* could run out without their hats or rubber shoes; *they* could eat what they chose without being bothered by anybody. Cecilia often compared herself to Cinderella. And the tears came into her eyes as she went through in imagination, a long career of suffering. But Cecilia never had a happy ending to her story. She always liked to die at the end; she did not care for the Prince to come; she concluded her story by imagining herself as dead, killed by her cruel stepmother, and drawn to the grave in an omnibus surrounded by weeping friends. The sadness of the situation, on this day in April, overcame her. She burst into tears.

“Why, Cecilia,” cried her sisters.

Just then a cab, with a trunk on it, drew up to the door. A smiling face appeared at the door of the cab. The children ran to the window. It was Aunt Susan's face.

III.

Their Aunt Susan was not an old lady. Somehow or other Aunt Susans generally seem to be old ladies. This Aunt Susan was young. She smiled a great deal; she talked a great deal; she was very good.

Rose rushed to the door. Aunt Susan kissed her, and gave her a bag and several bundles. Then she told the cabman to take up her trunk, and kissed Cecilia and Anna.

Rose was heartily glad to see her. Cecilia could not help wondering whether Aunt Susan had brought her anything, and saying to herself that it would not be so pretty as the gifts for the other girls. Anna was divided between pleasure at something having happened and the hope that Aunt Susan had brought plenty of candy. She raised her chubby face to her

aunt's, and that shrewd person saw her thought in her eyes.

"Yes, my dear," said Aunt Susan, "I've a box of chocolates in my satchel."

"I know the eight Beatitudes," replied Anna, with pardonable pride, "and you promised me a doll's tea-set if I learned them."

Aunt Susan laughed. "Very well," she said; "now I must run up to see your mother. Keep this satchel, Rose; but don't open it yet."

"Oh, this is just lovely," cried Rose. "I hoped and hoped that Aunt Susan would come soon. And on a rainy day, too. It is just lovely!"

Cecilia wiped her eyes and snuffled. "I am always the dissolute one; if anybody is to be ostrich-eyed, I am ostrich-eyed."

Rose was accustomed both to Cecilia's tearful moods and her habit of using words she had caught up without knowing their meaning. She meant "desolate" and "ostracized."

"Is Cecilia ostrich-eyed?" asked Anna. "Am I ostrich-eyed, too?" And the little girl stood on tiptoe to look at herself in the tilted mirror over the mantel-piece.

"You are not old enough to understand yet, poor dear," said Rose.

“She kissed you first and promised Anna a doll’s tea-set. She scarcely noticed me. She told Anna she had chocolates in her bag, too, and gave *you* the satchel. Nobody loves me because I am the black swan of the family.”

“I love you! we love you!”

And the two little girls hugged their sister enthusiastically.

Aunt Susan entered the room at this moment, like a spring breeze.

“Your mother is better,” she said, smiling. “Now you shall open the satchel, and guess the news I have to tell you.”

“I know the eight Beatitudes,” said Anna again, curling herself on the sofa next to Aunt Susan.

Aunt Susan laughed. “Right through without stopping?”

Anna repeated them without a blunder.

“Good, little girl!” Then she opened the satchel slowly and ceremoniously. It was an ordinary-looking alligator-skin bag, but it seemed to hold endless treasures. There were pink, green, and blue needle-cases, three boxes of candy, a tiny porcelain doll’s tea-set wrapped in cotton, three little gold medals of the Blessed Virgin, three story-books, two

pen-wipers with figures of little chickens upon them, and three large doughnuts.

Anna's eyes danced with delight.

Cecilia seemed pleased, too, until Aunt Susan drew out a sheet of music, "The Happy Farmer."

"This is for Rose to play."

Cecilia turned away from her share of the gifts. Rose always had more than she! To be sure her box of candy was the biggest, but then Rose had the piece of music.

She left her gifts on the sofa and went into a corner and sulked.

"Why, what's the matter, Cecilia?"

"Oh, *nothing*, Aunt Susan."

"What is it, dear?"

"Nothing at all."

"Tell me," said Aunt Susan, coaxingly.

"Are you sick?"

"Oh, no," answered Cecilia. "Only I'm nobody. Everybody is better treated than I am. But then I can't play, like Rose, and I'm not pretty, like Anna. I'm only a half-orphan, with nobody to love me."

Aunt Susan was puzzled. She was too open and sunny-hearted herself to understand the "sulks" in other people. Not knowing what

to say, she was silent. She looked at Rose, half expecting her to give up her piece of music to Cecilia.

“Cecilia is often this way,” said Anna. “*I* wouldn’t give her anything of mine.”

“No,” said Rose, devouring her caramels without offering them to the others. “*I* wouldn’t either. We don’t get presents often. We always keep all we get.”

Aunt Susan’s heart sank. The children—nice children they seemed, too—were entirely wrapped up in themselves.

Mrs. Desmond had been obliged to leave them so much to themselves, and not having seen them for a year, she knew she was to find them less perfect than she had imagined them to be. Nevertheless, she was rather shocked to find them all so selfish.

“Suppose I had given your candy to a poor little girl I saw on the train, as I came from Boston! She was dressed in black, and she looked so sad, that I was almost tempted to give her Rose’s caramels.”

“*I* would not have cared, so that you did not give mine away,” said Anna.

“I’m glad you did not do it,” exclaimed Rose. “I think you might give us Cecilia’s candy, Aunt Susan. She is not eating it.”

Cecilia hurled herself from her corner, and defiantly possessed herself of the rejected gifts.

What shall I do with them? asked their aunt of herself. She had promised their mother that she would take them into the country.

“Children,” she said, gravely, “I want you to try to think more of others. Do you think the Holy Child ever thought much of Himself and His own wants. I will tell you some pleasant news if you will try to be more like Him.” Then, very timidly, for Aunt Susan had little confidence in herself as a manager of children, she told them of the childhood of Our Lord.

“And now, little nieces,” she added, “I may as well tell you that your mother has promised to let you go to Idlewild with me for three months.”

There was a pause.

“Oh—h—h—h!” cried the children.

“We shall fish!” said Anna.

“And see the dear little cows!” exclaimed Rose.

“And swing in the apple orchard!” cried Cecilia. “Oh, my!”

In the middle of a torrent of exclamations, the dinner-bell rang.

IV.

May had come in before Aunt Susan and the children were ready to start for Idlewild.

Idlewild was near the sea. It was a small country village surrounded by farms. There were many beautiful bits of scenery around the place. There was one in particular on Aunt Susan's father's farm, which was particularly lovely. Three old oaks stood close together in a grassy nook, stretching out their boughs to a group of younger trees wreathed with climbing vines. Thus a glimpse of the blue waters of the bay was framed. Here on the soft grass, which in the spring was fringed with early, scentless violets, in the summer by tall daisies, and in the autumn by red-leaved blackberry-bushes, Aunt Susan loved to say her rosary quietly, and then to read or to sew. "Here," she had said to herself, "I shall tell the children stories every evening, if the weather is fair. It shall be the children's

spot, and the children's hour shall be when the Angelus rings from the chapel over the bay."

Aunt Susan was able to do this later; but she had by that time discovered that her nieces needed some discipline before they were ready to become like the little angels she thought they ought to be.

During her stay in the house with them — a period reaching through the month of April — she became convinced that they had been "spoiled" by having been kept too much in their own little circle. They had always had everything they wanted, and they could not understand the possibility of anybody needing anything. They were rapidly becoming selfish; and the over-indulgence of their old nurse helped to make them think that so long as they were comfortable, nobody could suffer.

Aunt Susan was amazed by their unconscious selfishness. She felt very unequal to dealing with it. When she spoke of it to Mrs. Desmond, the latter only smiled, and said that old maids' children were the only perfect ones in the world.

Aunt Susan said nothing to Mrs. Desmond after that. She spoke frequently of the life of the Holy Child, and tried to teach them by

example rather than precept. She soon saw, however, that they were willing to accept her services as a matter of course, and that the more she gave them, the more they expected.

On the first of May, Aunt Susan and the children, after a day of delightful excitement and bustle, reached the station at Idlewild.

They were in the country at last. The sea sparkled in the noon-day sun, as if some giant had thrown handfuls of jewels into the waves. The children first saw it through the pink and white boughs of the peach, pear, and apple-trees of their grandfather's orchard. The perfume of the blossoms, drifting in the fresh breeze under the clear blue sky, was delicious. Sir Walter, the young Alderney bull, was tied to a gnarled old apple tree, and out from the barn came running Aunt Susan's pet lamb. Rose was wild with delight when it came up to her, not at all frightened.

"Even the lamb loves her better than me," said Cecilia, bursting into tears. "I am only an outcast. I believe I am a changeling, and that mamma only adopted me."

Aunt Susan laughed. "Perhaps you mean a foundling, Cecilia dear. Don't use words you cannot understand. How lonely the old

farm will be without your grandfather. He will sail from Liverpool on the first of June. I *do* wish he were here — dear, dear father! How do you do, Dick?"

Dick was a little colored boy. He grinned at the little girls, and touched his cap to Aunt Susan.

"Please, miss," he said, "Mom says that little Plato Socrates hab de scarlet fever, and she's afeard for you or de young misses to come near de house. Mom sent me and my brudder down to Uncle Seth's this mornin', but she tole me to hang around 'bout train-time and tell you."

Dick was Mom Johnston's son. Mom Johnston took charge of the house in Aunt Susan's and her uncle's absence.

After a shower of questions and answers, Aunt Susan concluded to take the children down to Allenville, one station below. She would leave them there at the convent school, and return to see what could be done for little Plato Socrates Johnston.

The down train was almost due. Aunt Susan, leaving the trunks at the station in charge of Dick, entered the train, which rushed in almost as soon as she and her charges entered the station.

The children enjoyed these sudden changes very much. It was a long time since they had had any excitement of the kind.

V.

“Oh, dear!” cried Aunt Susan, as soon as they were seated; “I have left the satchel with your night-gowns in it. Wait till I come back!”

And she hastened from the car. A fresh, pleasant, stout woman who sat next to Rose seemed to gain decision from Aunt Susan’s action. She had looked puzzled and anxious.

“Little girl,” she said to Rose, “will you hold my baby, while I go out to the station and buy some crackers. I guess I’ll have as much time as the lady who has just gone out. Baby’s hungry.”

Rose *might* have said, “We have some crackers in our bag.” But she was not accustomed to offering courtesies to strangers. The “baby”—a little girl of about two years old—was put into her lap, and its mother followed Aunt Susan.

This "baby" had big blue eyes, "bangs" cut on its forehead, fat hands, and a pretty smile.

"Oh, how 'cunning!'" cried Cecilia. "Do let me hold her."

But Rose held fast to the little fat thing, wrapped in a heavy blue cloak. "No, her mother gave her to me."

"But she laughed at *me*," said Anna. "I want her."

"Of course, I'm nobody!" After a short pause, "Why, we're moving!"

And so they were!

The trees and fences seemed to be running past them faster and faster.

Cecilia and Anna looked at Rose with affrighted eyes.

Rose was equal to the occasion. "Aunt Susan will meet us at the next station. I have the tickets."

How Aunt Susan was to get there to meet them she did not know. She was sure, however, that Aunt Susan would be there. Everybody in the car was busy with his newspaper, his thoughts, or his neighbor's talk. The conductor, used to seeing children travel from one country station to another, took up their tickets without giving them especial attention.

“ Allenville ! ”

“ Allenville ! ” echoed the brakeman.

It was a large town. The delight of minding the baby had occupied the children up to this time. The cars stopped. Nobody got on or off.

“ The next station will do as well,” said Rose, in a superior manner.

Taylorville was the next stop. It was almost a city. They got out at Taylorville. The conductor told them to take the next train back to Allenville.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when they entered the station.

“ I will not mind the conductor,” Rose said. “ I'll just buy some pop-corn for the baby, and wait here until Aunt Sue and its mother come.”

The “ baby,” who could speak almost plain, said her name was “ Gracie.” What an exhaustless fund of joy she was to the children. She did not seem to miss her mother. She smiled and made dimples in her cheeks, cracked the pop-corn between her little teeth, and was very charming to the children. The station, a frame box, heated by a big stove, became too hot. Rose proposed to take a walk. It

was a new surprise and joy to see "Gracie" walk. She trotted along gaily. For the first time the children were unselfishly happy.

"Oh, how I do love a real *meat* baby," said Anna. "I am so tired of sawdust babies."

The weather was warm and pleasant. The station was on the outskirts of the town. Before they were aware of it, they had gone some distance into the open lots, whose level space was only broken by the high chimneys of factories. A light, here and there, appeared in the gray landscape.

"Why doesn't Aunt Susan come?" asked Anna, whose little legs were tired. It occurred to Rose that it was time to go back to the station.

The "baby" refused to walk. She said, in her funny little way, that her foot was "thore."

Rose tried to carry her. Then Cecilia took a turn. It grew darker. Anna began to cry and wanted to be carried too.

A fresh wind sprung up. The road was full of puddles and stones. Anna dragged on to Cecilia's hand. Rose stumbled onward with Gracie, who bawled at the top of her voice. Night had come. It was a foggy night, too. The children could not see one step ahead of

them. In despair, Rose sat down on the side of the road. The others sat down beside her.

“Cecilia, we are the eldest,” murmured Rose, who was so frightened by the cold and the darkness, that she could scarcely speak. “We must take care of these children.”

“Do you really think that I can be of use?” asked Cecilia, glad, in spite of all, to be made a person of importance. “I—I mean the children—are so hungry.”

They were all hungry, the crackers having disappeared long ago. They huddled close together on a flat stone, with the “baby” and Anna in the middle. The “baby,” wrapped in her warm cloak was asleep.

“I wish I had some bread, without butter or sugar,” sobbed Anna.

“This is the way poor people feel. How I pity them!” said Rose. “Oh, Cecilia, just to think how warm we have been kept, and how cold the poor are!”

“And how hungry!” echoed Cecilia.

“Poor little baby!” said Rose, shivering. “I will put my silk handkerchief around its neck. The Holy Child likes us to be kind to babies.”

And they said their prayers, and felt that

the Holy Child would surely send Aunt Susan. Then they fell asleep.

The light of a dark lantern was cast in all directions. Two policemen were walking slowly along the road in search of something.

Suddenly the light flashed under Rose's eyelids.

She started up. "You shan't take the baby or Anna," she cried.

For the first time in her life she had thought of somebody in preference to herself!

"Here they are, Joe!" cried the policeman, laughing. "The little vagabonds!"

Aunt Susan and the distracted mother, left at Idlewild, had telegraphed to Allenville, but through some mistake the message was sent to Allentown, three stations beyond. Telegrams were then sent by the railroad men to Taylorville; and, after some delay, the children were restored to Aunt Susan and the baby to its mother.

When Plato Socrates had recovered from the scarlet fever, the three children and Aunt Susan went back to Idlewild.

One June day, as Aunt Susan sat under the oaks, with Cecilia and Anna climbing about her, Cecilia said —

“I know what you meant, aunt, when you said I would always be cross and disagreeable until I learned how to help other people. I know now how poor little children have to suffer. I think the Holy Child is very good to us.”

“Yes, Aunt Susan, I think so too,” cried Rose, who was feeding her lamb some distance away from them.

“I am glad,” said Aunt Susan, making a little prayer of thanksgiving.





BIANCA.

BIANCA MALATESTA was never idle. She was just thirteen years of age; but she could not remember when she had not worked. She lived in a beautiful country, at Sorrento, in Sicily, where oranges and orange-blossoms are as common as apples and apple-blossoms here.

In spite of all the beauty of the place, life was not easy. Bianca's brothers, except one, Giovanni, had been forced into the Italian army. Bianca's parents were dead, and she and Giovanni, managed the little farm. If the two brothers were only back, she often thought, how easy the work would be, how happy life would seem!

"We cannot have all things, my daughter," said Father Caracci. "If we were truly happy here, we would never want to go to Heaven."

When the good priest laid his hand on her

head, Bianca felt comforted. Giovanni and she had at least one friend in the world.

Times were hard. The rulers of Italy are no longer friends of the poor. They spend large sums of money in building clumsy war-vessels, while the poor have to work their fingers to the bone to pay the taxes which such extravagances entail on them. In consequence, many poor Italians, formerly prosperous, are beggars. And yet we hear people talk as if things in Italy had improved since Victor Emanuel robbed the Holy Father. In truth, things have not improved. The poor suffer and are ground down. Sunny Italy is losing its sunshine, for joy has left the hearts and faces of the poor.

One day, in the orange-picking season, when everybody was busy, Giovanni caught a fever. Father Caracci, who was something of a doctor, shook his head when he came. Giovanni was a good boy; he did not fear death, but he feared to leave his sister Bianca, his "dear little sister! And the oranges still on the trees, the taxes so high, and nobody to work the farm."

"Trust Bianca with God and His Blessed Mother," said Father Caracci. "They will

take care of her. Don't trouble yourself about the oranges."

Father Caracci knew well how to console the frank, kind boy, Giovanni; and he died full of faith, hope, and charity. Father Caracci found it harder to console Bianca. She felt herself to be all alone in the world. She struggled on bravely; but the willing hearts and strong hands that would have helped her were wasting away in the barracks, and poor Bianca had to work for herself, with an occasional lift from a neighbor; but, as a rule, the neighbors had enough to do to work for themselves.

Bianca struggled bravely. She had little time to knit now. The work of the vineyard and the little orange grove fell to her. Early and late she toiled in the fields, scarcely pausing a moment. It was all useless. The tax-gatherer came several times, and one day the little farm was sold. Bianca was homeless.

The blow struck at her heart. After all the debts were paid, a very small bundle of necessary things and very little money were left for Bianca. She could not speak to any human being in her great sorrow. Her home was gone! gone! The dear little house in which

her mother and father had said the Angelus on so many happy nights was gone! She loved each orange-tree as if it were a friend. Whither could she go?

Tears blinded her, as she saw the old house and the trees swimming before. Whither could she go?

The only place open to her seemed to be the chapel of her Mother. With the tears fast falling from her eyes, she rushed to the little village church. There, before the statue of Our Blessed Lady—an old, but beloved statue, decked by pious peasants with silks and jewels—she poured forth her sorrow. There seemed to be no place on earth for her. Oh, if the good God would only take her to Giovanni!

She was indeed alone in the world. Her two brothers, Carlo and Pasquale, would not be permitted to leave the army until after the lapse of two years.

As she arose from her knees, she saw Father Caracci waiting for her at the door of the church.

“Poor Bianca,” he said; “you are very unhappy; but what are your sufferings to those of Our Lord.”

“I have no home Father,” faltered Bianca.

“Our Lord had no place to lay his head, child.”

Bianca was silent for a moment, as she choked down a sob. “It is true, Father. If Giovanni were alive—oh, if Giovanni were alive!”

The old priest laid his wrinkled hand on her head. “Look at poor Beppo, Bianca. Poor Beppo is only ten years old; his father and mother died last month of the fever. His uncle is in America, and he wants him out there. But there is nobody to take him. Think of it! Poor Beppo must go out to America, where it is cold; he must leave the orange-trees and—”

Bianca made an impatient gesture. “What are the orange-trees to me without Giovanni?”

“These are still beautiful. God made them, Bianca. But poor Beppo is all alone; nobody is going to America, and I know not what to do with the poor boy until some one will care for him. I cannot send him alone in the ship.” And Father Caracci sighed. “Well, Bianca, I have good news for you. The Countess Lilli wants a girl in her kitchen, to peel the vege-

tables and to help the cook. I spoke to her about you."

Bianca's cheeks flushed. "I will not be a servant, Father. I worked for Giovanni; but now that he is dead, I will not work in anybody's kitchen."

Father Caracci paused in surprise. "This is foolish pride, Bianca. The Countess Lilli is, as everybody knows in Sorrento, a good Christian, and consequently a kind mistress."

"I will *not* be a servant," said Bianca, all her grief gone, and her cheeks flaming. "None of our family ever served in the kitchens of others. I have heard my father say so. I would work for you, Father, if you wanted me in your kitchen, but for no other. And you do not want me, because you have old Lorenzo Pradi. I will go to America with Beppo. There, they say, one does not have to work for others. There everybody is free. They are not Christians there," cried Bianca, in a burst of enthusiasm. "I will convert them."

Father Caracci shook his head and smiled slightly.

"Pride, Bianca," he said, "has never made a convert. There are some very good Chris-

tians, my child, in America. People have to work there as well as here."

"I have some money. I will go with Beppo."

Father Caracci thought for a moment. Beppo's uncle was a good man. Perhaps he could find something for Bianca to do in the new country. And poor Beppo sadly needed a protector. Bianca was not much older than Beppo ; but her independent and healthy mode of life had given her the prudence and self-reliance of a woman. Beppo's uncle had sent enough money to pay the passage of the person who should go with Beppo.

"Well, Bianca, since you have not sufficient humility to serve in the kitchen of the Countess Lilli, you shall go to America."

"When?"

"Let me see. On Saturday next a steamer leaves. Be ready to-morrow ; you will find poor little Beppo up in my house."

Bianca stood a moment as if stunned ; to tell the truth, she had not expected to be taken at her word. Well, even a country of cold and heretics would be better than to be anybody's servant.

Poor Beppo was a chubby little fellow ; very

lonely in the priest's large empty room. He knew Bianca, and he ran into her arms.

The Countess Lilli came herself to ask Bianca, whose goodness and industry was known, to take service in her household, but Bianca begged to be excused. On Saturday, Bianca and Beppo started on their way to the new world. Father Caracci gave them his blessing, and he said to Bianca—

“You will have to learn to be a servant. We are all servants, Bianca.”

Fortunately, there were few passengers in the steerage when Bianca and Beppo made the voyage, and the steward, who also was an Italian from Sorrento, kept watch over the two children during the rough passage.

On landing in New York, Bianca and Beppo were taken to the uncle, who lived, with his wife, in a large tenement-house. He was not a rich man by any means, but his savings would have bought the Malatesta farm over and over again. Bianca could not understand why he should live in such a dark and crowded place. A little hut in Italy among the orange-trees—a bed in the fields there—would be better than this!

Beppo's uncle smiled.

“I must work, Bianca mia. There is no work for me in Italy, so here I must stay. I must find a place for you, too.”

Bianca said, “I will not stay.”

“Will you go back and be a servant in the kitchen of the Countess Lilli?”

“Never,” said Bianca; “I will work in the fields, but I cannot be a servant, to be ordered about by everybody.”

Beppo was very fond of Bianca, and the uncle, who had no children, was delighted to have Beppo with him. Although Bianca’s pride made the uncle indignant, yet he took a great interest in her.

Bianca was always busy; she would knit from morning to night, but she wanted to do only what she pleased. Beppo’s uncle took her to his fruit stand down town, where she could have been very useful, as she learned the name and value of American currency very quickly; but Bianca would not stay in one place all day. She wanted to work in a vineyard, as she had done in Italy.

“But there are no vineyards,” said the uncle.

Poor Bianca became very homesick. Nothing but bricks and mortar, dingy crowds of people, and work in close rooms.

"Some day," the uncle said, "I will go back to Italy, and buy a little farm. Then I will enjoy what I have worked for. That is the reason I work so hard. If you, Bianca, would go back to Sorrento, you must do what you can get to do. Here, in this country, 'the poor man who chooses loses.'"

Little Beppo did not like the new country at all. It was cold. He could not see the soft, blue water. There were no statues of the Blessed Virgin or the Saints in the streets. He could not understand it at all. Bianca was his only consolation.

Place after place was found for Bianca. She would not learn to make artificial flowers, because the room in which they were made was too close; she became impatient when the foreman of a manufactory tried to teach her how to pour chocolate drops into the moulds. She wanted to work in the fields. She hated the city. Beppo's uncle hated the city too; but he stayed in it because his work was in it. But Bianca could not understand this.

At last Beppo's uncle wrote back to Father Caracci, who, in reply, said that Bianca ought to do what her hand found to do. "Be faithful, be careful of the small things that fall in

your way, and God will be pleased to reward you for it even in this world. Remember that the best thing you can do in your state of life is to work contentedly at whatever God sends you to do."

But in spite of this Bianca wanted to have her own way. She would do nothing, except what she liked to do. She helped Beppo's aunt with the housework very willingly, but then Beppo's aunt did not need help. "You must earn your living," said the aunt, good-naturedly. "There is always enough macaroni for you here, because Beppo loves you; but what will you do when we go away? You must learn to work for others, like the rest of us. If you do not you will not have enough money to get back to Italy."

"I hate the city," said Bianca, sullenly. "I want to go back to Sorrento."

"And serve in the kitchen of the Countess Lilli?"

"No."

Beppo's aunt sighed.

"You cannot, Bianca mia, have your melon and eat it, too."

Bianca was stubborn.

Two years went by. Beppo went to school,

and Bianca, in spite of all warnings, would not work at the occupations of the Italians around her. She said :

“ I am no slave. I will not submit to be told ‘ do this,’ ‘ do that ’ by everybody.”

“ ‘ Blessed are the meek,’ ” said Beppo’s aunt, in Italian, “ ‘ for they shall possess the land.’ We who are poor must endure much in silence. It is for the glory of God.”

Bianca shrugged her shoulders, and began to talk English with Beppo.

“ You like-a school-a ? ”

“ Ees — *si* — *si* ! ” said Beppo.

The conversation here closed. Bianca’s English words were exhausted.

One evening, just as the steaming dish of macaroni was placed on the table, and Beppo’s aunt had put a small bottle of light wine before her husband, he took Beppo on his knee, and said, “ Now we shall go back to Italy.”

“ To Italy ! ” cried his wife.

“ To Italy ? ” screamed Bianca.

“ *Si, si* ! ” cried Beppo’s uncle. “ I have worked hard, and Giovanni Tosti, to whom I lent some money, paid it back with interest to-day. Besides that, I have enough in the bank to buy a farm and never to be afraid of the taxes.”

Beppo clapped his hands." He had worked too ; he had sold papers after school-hours and saved every cent.

"Thanks to the Mother of God, who never ceases to pray for us !" cried Beppo.

"Ah, yes, we have worked," Beppo's uncle said, looking at his wife affectionately ; "worked in the cold and storm, in the heat, against discouragements and hopelessness."

"And the Pagans that call Italians 'dagos,'" cried Bianca, recalling certain battles at the fruit-stand.

"We have had our troubles," said Beppo's uncle ; "we have been frugal ; if we drink wine to-night, it is the first time in many years. We can forget all, except the joy of going home."

Bianca was radiant.

"Oh, how I long to see Sorrento again. My brothers will soon be out of the army !"

"Are you going ?" asked Beppo's uncle.

Bianca was silent. She had earned no money. She had followed her own will. She turned red.

"It will be hard for you, Bianca," said Beppo's aunt. "You will have no home now. The fruit-stand might have been yours, if you

had worked for it; but it now belongs to Giovanni Tosti, who came here when you came."

Bianca began to cry.

"The baker at the corner wants a young girl to help his wife in the kitchen," said Beppo's uncle, gravely. "I have promised that you shall go there."

Bianca began to cry.

"Why," said Beppo, who had not been attending to the talk, "why do you weep when we are all going back to beautiful Italy?"

This caused Bianca to cry afresh. Beppo's uncle and aunt looked at each other. What could they do?

"I will go too; I will be a servant in Italy to the Countess Lilli."

"It is too late," said Beppo's uncle. "The Countess Lilli died six months ago. Surely I read it to you from Father Caracci's letter."

Bianca wrung her hands. She flung herself on the floor in bitterness. Oh, how she regretted her wilfulness. To see them all — all whom she loved — go to sunny Italy and leave her among strangers. How bitterly had she been punished! It was too late now.

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On a sunny May day the steamer sailed down the bay, carrying Beppo and his uncle and aunt. Bianca stood on the dock, weeping bitterly. She was alone; now she *must* work for another, whether she would or not.

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Three years passed. Bianca learned to be content. She spent much of her spare time in the church, praying for meekness. She neglected nothing that was given her to do. Her care was noticed by her employers and others, and gained her the reward which patient industry always gains. One morning she bought a ticket at the offices of a steamship company. She had saved enough to take her home and to leave her something over, for in Italy money is scarce, and a little, which is hard to get, appears a great deal.

When she reached Sorrento, Father Caracci met her with a smile.

“What have you lost, Bianca?”

“Pride and stubbornness.”

“Then,” said the priest, “you have gained much.”

Bianca’s earnings helped her brothers to get a small vineyard when they came out of the

army ; and now the three are very happy together.

The moral of my story is :

Do well whatever you can get to do, and leave the rest to God.





A VACATION TALK.

THE vacation days have come at last ! For the last two weeks you have been counting the days to come, as the writer used to do. Suddenly—for all pleasant things come suddenly, no matter how long we have expected them—the days of June pass into the more glowing hours of July, and the schools of children are set free !

No more watching a waving bough through the school-house window and wishing you were the bird upon it. No more hoping that the clock would go faster and bring nearer the hour of “letting out.” No more lagging steps to school !

Of course you enjoy your freedom now, and the world seems made for you. The roses bloom, the raspberries hide in the bushes, just peeping out to see that you are coming, the

streams are warmed for swimming,—all nature cries welcome !

But, in spite of this, you will soon grow weary, if you accept all the invitations of the time, and play too much. “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy,” but “all play and no work” makes him an unhappy, restless, and discontented boy. Before the vacation days are over, you will grow weary of them, if you spend your time in play, and, while you will hate to go back to school, you will be tired of vacation.

Do not throw your books in a corner and let them become dusty. Refresh your memory by a glance into your geography book, or into your book of sums. Ask your father if he has any bills that you can make out. Ask your mother if she has any wood in the cellar you can cut up for her. Don't wait for father and mother to ask *you*. Remember that you will enjoy your game of base-ball, croquet, or lawn-tennis all the better if you have done some earnest work.

And don't say “to-morrow.” It is a word that kills energy and good work. Protestants are fond of saying that Spain has lost her force and greatness because of her religion. This is

not true. The Spaniards of to-day say "to-morrow" too much. Everything is "manana." "To-morrow—to-morrow." Don't say "I'll begin to look over my lessons to-morrow; I will learn a French verb; I'll make sure of my Latin declensions; I will do a sum in addition of fractions—to-morrow!" These to-morrows seldom come!

Those of you who live in the country have an open book before you—the book of nature. Like the melancholy Jaques, in "As You Like It," you may find "sermons in stones," if you will. With a book on botany or an approved volume on geology, you may find profit and pleasure in long rambles, besides expanding your lungs.

A learned convert to the Catholic Church—I think it was Professor Haldemann—was once asked what let him into the Church. He said "bugs." His close study of the minor creatures had made him so long to serve God, that he was led into the only road to Him—the Church.

Now, if you take the trouble to observe closely the small things around you, you, too, will be charmed by the graciousness of Our Lord. You will find many reasons for loving

Him which might have escaped you. Besides, you will learn facts of practical value which may be of great use to you in after life.

I may as well tell you, as an example of this, the story of Ned Acton. Ned Acton was a very sick boy. He could not run, swim, or play ball, like other boys. He used to sit on his father's door-step and watch the other boys play. He had not many books; but one day, in an old "reader," he read the dialogue called "Eyes and No Eyes." It is all about two boys, one of whom sees everything, the other sees nothing.

"Now," thought Ned, "why should I not use my eyes, since they are stronger than my legs and arms?"

About this time, Father Ray, the rector of the church in Holston, gave him some books, one of them being a book on geology. It was a simple text-book. Ned set to work to study it.

In a few days he could tell the names of the pebbles and pieces of rock around his father's house. The desire to gain new knowledge of rocks and stones made him walk. This strengthened his ankles. In a short time, armed with a little hammer and his book on geology, he took long rambles.

“It’s useless,” his father said, with a sigh, “but it amuses the poor boy.”

Ned’s future was a great trouble to his father—a great trouble. He was not rich enough to give Ned piano or organ lessons. But he longed to give him some means of making a livelihood in the future. This troubled him night and day. “Ah,” he often said to his wife, “what would become of poor Ned if I were to die?”

But Ned did what his hand found to do, or, rather, what his eyes found to do. He studied and explored; and exercise and interest in his occupation made him stronger. He was happy. His little garret room was full of specimens of quartz, crystal, and water-worn pebbles.

One day, Squire Warner, the owner of half the county, stopped Ned’s father in the street.

“I want you,” he said, “to come with me to the bank, Mr. Acton.”

Ned’s father was surprised, but he went with him. He was more surprised when Squire Warner thrust into his hand a check for five hundred dollars.

“What?” stammered Mr. Acton.

“It’s yours,” said Squire Warner, slapping Mr. Acton on the back. “I want you to use

it in educating that boy of yours. I'll give you five hundred more this day next year, and help him along after that. With his little hammer, he found copper in my west meadow."

It was true ; Ned's lonely studies had made his fortune. He never became very strong ; but he was strong enough to do a great deal of good work, and, after a time, to help his parents and the younger children.

How had he done this ? By using his eyes.





A TALK IN THE FALL.

NOVEMBER makes us think of fires, and the comforts of the home circle. The chestnut burrs in the woods are all that remain of the chestnuts, which the boys and squirrels have made the most of. All Saints' Day has come and passed, and All Souls' Day, too. The writer hopes that you did not forget to offer up your communion for the souls of the faithful departed, especially for the souls of your friends who have gone before.

Think a moment of how good and kind your friends were to you before they died. Perhaps it is your mother or your father who has gone. Perhaps, the dear old grandmother or grandfather. Can you be so cruel as to forget them now that a prayer of yours may help them! Lord Tennyson, a poet, although not a Catholic, writes these words in the "Passing of Arthur."

“If thou should'st never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves, and those who call them friend ?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

This is worth reading. Lord Tennyson found the old story of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table—a Catholic story, as it was, and put it into imperishable poetry. All the greatest poets the world has had since the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ have gotten their material from Catholic sources.

Chaucer, who wrote the *Canterbury Tales*, was a Catholic. Shakespeare derived his inspiration from centuries of Catholic thought and culture. Dryden became a Catholic. Tennyson and Longfellow were most Catholic in their best poems.

Let us not forget that the world owes to the Church all the most beautiful things in Christian art and literature.

The writer thinks that, as Catholics, you ought to try to deserve this heritage. You ought to remember that non-Catholics say over

and over again, "Catholics are so ignorant. Their Church is the mother of ignorance." They do not know that the most ignorant Catholic who knows his Catechism is wiser than they, because, although he may not know anything of art, literature, or science, he knows how to work for God, and to save his soul.

But you who have opportunities, here in this new world, ought to make yourself as perfect as you can, that you may be worthy, in a degree, of the Church. There is no reason why you, a child of Christ and His Church, should not show that you are aware that the Church is the protector of civilization and knowledge : that, without the Church there would have been no Christian civilization.

Look at Turkey, China, and India without Christianity. These countries are civilized, but their civilization is not Christian. Turkey is most corrupt, rotten. The politicians call it "the sick man." In India and China, mothers kill their little girl children, or leave them on the roadside to die. ; and when a child is born deaf or dumb, it is killed. And yet, Confucius, the philosopher, whom the wise among the Chinese adore, left many noble maxims. But all the treasures of human wisdom and knowl-

edge cannot save a country from corruption, when Christianity does not govern it. A devout Belgian priest has lately established the first asylum for deaf and dumb at Bombay. Christianity has begun to save the children.

.

An old friend who occasionally looks over my shoulder tells me that I have been talking over the heads of you children, and that you do not understand what I have said. I hope he is wrong, for I think you are a great deal smarter than the "grown-ups" would have us believe. I know when I was a boy, I hated stories in "baby words," written down to me.

.

Jack Dowdy is the most helpful boy I know. His mother is a widow; and she makes many sacrifices to keep Jack at the parochial school, and Jack knows it. He said to me the other day, when he brought home my washed clothes from his mother's:

"Do you think it is better to become a good carpenter, or a clerk, sir?"

I told him that a trade would be a good thing to learn. There are too many clerks, too many young men with white hands, expert at making

and adding up figures, and too few good carpenters.

“Look, Jack,” I said, pointing to a recess in the wall, “I want a bookcase there; but, although I have made a plan, none of the carpenters can make it.”

“Why?” asked Jack, looking at the plan. “I think if I were a carpenter *I* could make it.”

“Perhaps so. If you put brains into your work, and had kept your eyes open during your apprenticeship, you might. But all the young carpenters I have seen say that I shall have to get a ‘first-class man’ to do it, and none of them are ‘first-class’ carpenters. If I were a young man, I should be ashamed to say it. Now I would give thirty dollars for a good bookcase that can be taken apart on the plan I have made.”

Jack’s eyes sparkled. “Oh, I wish I was a carpenter!”

“Well, now, learn a lesson, Jack, and resolve to do your *best* at whatever you undertake. If you don’t do that, you will never be a ‘first-class’ man. Opportunities will come and pass by; you will be unable to grasp them, unless you resolve to do everything *well*—not

to slur the smallest thing. To drive each nail as hard as it can be driven. To have patience; never to hurry, in order to be done with a piece of work."

"But, sir," said Jack, "clerks are more genteel; and mother says——"

"My dear boy, you must wish to be a good workman rather than to be genteel. It is no advantage to have white hands. Better be an honest, patient carpenter, putting brains into your work, than a clerk with white shirt and hands, a diamond pin, and a load of debt. 'Gentility' is a word that no American should honor."

Jack went off. I hope he profited by my sermon.





HE WANTED TO BE A CURIOSITY.

I.

JOE was taken by his aunt to a Museum one day. It was a bright, clear day in winter, and Joe felt very happy as he sat in the car near his aunt, and asked questions about the wonders to come. Would he see the Fat Woman? Oh, yes. And the Little Elephant? Oh, yes. And the Living Skeleton. Yes, yes. And a Lion? Yes. And the Bearded Woman?—Just then the conductor cried out, “Museum!” and the car stopped. A number of children, with their fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, or nurses, got out.

A brass band was playing a march in lively time. Indeed, it sounded as if the music was run by steam, so loud and quick did it go. And when the drum and cymbals came in, it

seemed louder than thunder to Joe. His aunt put her gloved hands to her ears, but Joe laughed with pleasure.

“I am afraid, Aunt Lucy,” he said, “that you don’t care for music.”

“I don’t call this music,” Aunt Lucy said.

Joe thought Aunt Lucy was very stupid ; he said :

“I think it is lovely.”

There were immense pictures hung over the front of the house ; pictures of all colors, red, blue, yellow, and green. There was a big man in a pink suit, painted on a green ground, playing with two hideous serpents ; there was a lady so fat, that the canvas gave out, and they had to leave her with only one arm, and cut off part of her shoulder. In fact, the splendor of the outside of the museum was so great, that Joe at once concluded it could not be equalled within.

A man stood outside with a big snake coiled around his arm. He said :

“Step in, ladies and gentlemen, and see the giant serpent, to which this here is a mere hinfant.”

Joe knew by the “hinfant” that the speaker was an Englishman ; so, while Aunt Lucy paid

for the tickets at the box-office, he stepped up to him and spoke :

“ I say, sir, I was in London with my father. Did you live in London ? ”

The man grinned, and put his hand on Joe’s head :

“ Step up, ladies and gentlemen,” he bawled, “ and see the Live Infant Phenomenon that was in Lunnon with its father.”

Some people laughed ; and Aunt Lucy darted up to the man, gave him “ one of her looks,” as she afterwards said, and took Joe’s hand.

“ Did you see that the impertinent man was exhibiting you as a curiosity, Joe ? ”

“ And why didn’t you let me be ? ” said Joe, in an aggrieved tone. “ I would like to be a curiosity.”

Aunt Lucy would probably have shaken Joe after her usual brisk manner, but at that moment the splendor of the museum broke upon them.

There stood the Fat Woman, one-sixth the size of the canvas picture, but, nevertheless, fat enough to satisfy everybody who paid a dime. There was the Living Skeleton, with tight velvet breeches on his bony legs. There was the Circassian Girl, her hair stretching

from her head, "like quills upon the fretful porcupine." There was the Little Lady, much smaller than Joe himself, wearing a gold watch and a diamond ring. There was a lean Lion in a cage, and a hungry looking Monkey in another.

Joe began to ask questions, and Aunt Lucy had a hard time answering them. At last it was time to go. The brass band was playing "Home, Sweet Home."

"Oh, dear!" said Joe, as he clung to Aunt Lucy's hand in the crowd; "I wish there were more curiosities to see. Don't curiosities have a lovely time? I wish I was a curiosity!"

"A lovely time!" said Aunt Lucy. "How silly you are, Joe! They have a very hard time, poor things!"

"You *always* contradict me, Aunt Lucy," said Joe, in an injured tone. "I'm sure the curiosities have a good time. They just stand still and do nothing, and eat peanuts. Why, the Fat Woman and the Living Skeleton were eating peanuts, Aunt Lucy. Oh, it must be lovely!"

Joe was a very lazy boy. He hated study; he hated work. In summer he liked to lie on the grass, and in winter to lounge on a sofa

and look at picture-books. When he was asked to go for anything for his father or mother, he said, "Wait a minute." He was always saying wait a minute; for, as I said, he was a very lazy boy. His health was good, and there was no excuse for him. His laziness gave his father and mother great concern. He never liked to get up in time for Mass; and, as he was expected to go every morning with his father, this laziness gave a great deal of trouble.

After his visit to the museum, Joe always said when he was asked to do anything requiring exertion:

"I wish I were a curiosity!"

II.

Joe lived in a city on a river. It is a very pleasant place, and so we will call it Pleasant City.

One day, Joe's grandmother, who lives in New York, invited Aunt Lucy to stay with

her. Joe wanted to go; but his father said that, as he had been so lazy all winter, he must stay at home in the spring. So Aunt Lucy went alone. She travelled with Grandmother up to Canada. There they saw a camp of North American Indians, and Aunt Lucy sent Joe a picture of them. Later, in Montreal, she met a sailor who had been up in the Arctic regions, and, from his descriptions, she made a sketch of the Esquimaux. Joe put both the pictures in his scrap-book. Aunt Lucy wrote Joe this letter:—

“DEAR JOE:

“Grandmother and I bought some beaded bags from the Indians. They are very nice—these Indians—to talk to. The squaws showed us their papooses tied to boards. It was very funny. Grandmother gave a poor sailor some money for carrying our trunks up-stairs; he told her he had been up in the Arctic regions, and he talked a long time about the Esquimaux, which name is, I believe derived from the French words, ‘*Ceux qui meoou*’ (Those who meoou—like cats). They are strange people. They live principally on fat and the blubber of the whale. Grandmother says you may come to New York, and that Coney Island is a wonderful place.”

Joe asked :

“May I?”

“No,” said his father, “not until you are able to read Aunt Lucy’s letter. You have been so lazy and idle, that you can’t spell ten words out of twenty, and you can scarcely read at all.”

Joe cried. He went to work hard, and in a month he was able to spell out Aunt Lucy’s letter better than his father expected. So he gave Joe permission to go. He was put in charge of a conductor known to his father; and, after a short trip, reached Jersey City in safety. There he was met by his Aunt Lucy. She kissed him a great many times, and took him over to the refreshment stand and gave him a cup of nice chocolate. Joe was in high spirits.

“But, oh, Aunt Lucy,” he said; “I wish I was a curiosity. Curiosities get paid for doing nothing. They eat peanuts every day—I saw ’em at the Dime Museum at home. Oh, dear, when I grow up, I am going to be a curiosity.”

“You will be a curiosity,” said Aunt Lucy, severely; “you’ll be the idlest boy in New York, if you don’t take care.”

But Aunt Lucy and Joe were good friends. They had so much to talk about, on their way up to Grandmother's, and so much to see, that this little passage of arms was forgotten.

The elevated railroad was a marvel to Joe. How it flew through the air! And "inside it was just like a little parlor," he said. The glimpses of life he caught in the windows of the houses, as the train shot past them amused Joe very much. In one, he saw a little baby in a high chair; in another, a small girl having her hair combed; in another, a woman setting a table for dinner; and in still another, two boys making a kite.

Grandmother was glad to see Joe. The lamps were lighted, and dinner was ready. It was all very cheerful; and, after dinner, Grandmother gave him a big scrap-book and a pocket-knife with six blades.

"Oh, dear, said Joe, "I think grandmothers are *almost* as good as mothers."

Grandmother laughed. "Well, Joe," she asked, "what will you do, when you grow up? I like boys to have some idea of what they will do when they grow up. What will you be, a carpenter, a——"

"Oh, nothing," answered Joe, cheerfully;

"I don't intend to do anything, I'm going to be a curiosity."

Grandmother was astonished.

Aunt Lucy explained; Grandmother shook her head, and said, "What a strange boy!"

"Do you think I'm a strange boy?" Joe asked, earnestly; "because, if I am, people will want to see me at the museum. When I grow up, I'm going to be either a Tattooed Boy or a Feejee Cannibal; because it's good fun to be paid for doing nothing but just eating peanuts."

"Dear! dear!" said Grandmother; "I *do* hope, Lucy, he'll grow out of this idea. We never had a Tattooed Boy or a Feejee Cannibal on *our* side of the family, had we?"

"I should hope not," answered Aunt Lucy, smiling a little.

"I tell you, Aunt Lucy, as we've always been good friends when you don't fuss about a fellow too much, I don't mind, if I get you an engagement when I grow up, as a Living Curiosity. With your hair fluffed out, you'd make a good Circassian Girl."

Grandmother said it was time for Joe to go to bed.

On the next day, Grandmother, Joe, and

Aunt Lucy went to Coney Island. They started from the Battery in a steamboat. The breeze was fresh and cool. They had chicken and ham sandwiches and cake in a pasteboard box, which they could throw away when they were done with it, and coffee in one bottle, and lemonade in another.

Joe had never seen the sea before ; it was wonderful ; but, to his mind, not so wonderful as the noise of the organ around which the merry-go-rounds revolved ; the sled which ran like lightning on a wooden track ; the gay crowds ; and, above all, the splendid scenes depicted on the canvases of the museums. It was strange to see men, women, and children riding around to the loud music of an organ, on gilded giraffes, elephants, and ostriches ; but more strange, more magnificent, were the attractions of the museums.

Joe would not move away from one of them, where a fat woman was pictured on a yellow throne, dressed in purple, with a vermillion crown on her head.

“Oh, Grandmother !” Joe said, “*do* take me in. I’m sure it’s *my* Fat Woman, and the Living Skeleton must be the one I saw in Pleasant City. *Do* take me in !”

Grandmother hesitated a minute, and then, seeing that other boys were going in with their fathers and mothers, smiled and said to Aunt Lucy :

“ Well, I suppose we must go.”

This museum contained some curiosities Joe had not seen at Pleasant City. There was a Crocodile in water, a Fat Baby, and Views of Europe. You looked through holes, and saw these Views. The first was a temple with pillars—that is, a photograph of a temple with pillars. “ This,” the man said, “ is the Coliseum at Rome.” Then you looked through another hole, and saw another temple with a portico and pillars. “ This,” said the man, “ is the Acropolis at Athens.” Again you looked through another hole, and saw another temple with pillars. “ This,” said the man, “ is a Wonder of Classic Art ; you will see it, when you go to Europe.” Finally, Joe looked through another hole. “ You now perceive,” said the man, “ St. Peter’s at Rome.” But it was a temple with pillars, just like the others.

“ There’s a great deal of sameness about Europe, Aunt Lucy ; I don’t think I’d like to go there ; it’s just like Girard College in Philadelphia. *I would rather stay at Coney Island.*”

This was Joe's conclusion, having seen the views.

The Curiosity of Curiosities, in this collection, was a Learned Pig. He could add up figures chalked on the black-board. He could dance on his hind legs. He walked around the stage with a Derby hat on, like a dude.

"Oh," cried Joe, "he is a gem!"

"Come on," said his Grandmother. "Don't get lost!"

Joe did not hear. His eyes and ears were all for the Learned Pig.

It was getting dark. A great crowd had come into the museum, and gone out again. Joe was left almost alone, for his Grandmother and Aunt Lucy had been carried out by the crowd on its way to supper. The museum was about to close for an hour, that the Curiosities might have something to eat.

The Learned Pig was kept in a pen behind the Fat Woman. The Fat Woman screened him from view, except when he was performing his tricks on the stage. Joe, in admiration of the Pig, stood in front of his pen, hidden from view, too. When the manager cleared the tent, and a long table was brought out for supper, Joe was not seen. Therefore he was

left between the Learned Pig and the Fat Woman.

The table was spread with bread, meat, potatoes, bottles of beer, and tea-cups. Then the Fat Woman descended to take her place at the head 'of the table. The Living Skeleton sat on her right hand, and handed the butter to everybody; the Circassian Girl made the tea; a Two-headed Boy and the Feejee Cannibal opened some bottles of beer, and the other Curiosities took their places just like you or me, or any less exalted mortal. There was some trouble about carving the cold beef. The manager, a bald man, with red whiskers, wanted to do it, but the Living Skeleton would not permit it. He said the manager had a habit of cutting the slices of meat too thin, and he would not stand that.

“If the ladies and gentlemen will excuse me,” said the Circassian Lady, with great amiability, “I’ll take off my wig and carve. A wig is very warm these days.”

Joe was amazed at the greediness of the Living Skeleton. He had never seen anybody eat so much.

“Take care,” said the manager to the Skeleton, “if you eat so much, you’ll gain

flesh. You know you weigh half a pound more than you did last year. If you keep on, I'll have to reduce your salary. You're not worth as much as a good Boa Constrictor as it is."

"I tell you," cried the Two-headed Boy, as he filled one mouth with beef, and the other with bread, "I must have more money. I am tired of being a Living Curiosity. Are you not Jim?"

The other mouth answered at once: "Yes, sir! It's no fun to be tied up the way we are, making people believe there is only one boy here, when there's two. I'd rather go and dig cellars, I would!"

Joe was amazed. Such sentiments from a Living Curiosity—the happiest of beings! Joe waited for the manager to rebuke him or them; but nothing was said.

"Oh, dear," said the Fat Woman, fanning herself with her handkerchief; "I'm quite wretched—quite! I would give all I have in this world to be able to move about like other people! I'm thoroughly and utterly wretched. Death would be a relief!"

Joe could endure this no longer. The Learned Pig would utter sentiments of in-

gratitude after awhile. This thing must come to an end.

“Excuse me, ma’am,” said Joe, taking off his hat, and stepping forward, “but I must say you are very wicked. Where do you expect to go when you die? You ought to be happy; you sit still all day, and eat peanuts. I saw you eating peanuts in Pleasant City, and you are eating peanuts here. You ought to be thankful, ma’am. Many a poor boy—I mean poor lady—has to run around all day for other people, and never sees a peanut, except on Sunday.”

The Circassian Lady dropped the carving-knife. The Two-headed Boy grinned with one mouth, and said “Put him out!” with the other.

“Do I hear right?” asked the Fat Woman, in surprise, turning her eyes on Joe. “Know, rash youth, that I was never in Pleasant City. *I* do not star in the provinces. It must have been some base imitation. I am Madame Lurline de Chateaux-Margeaux the Great, Only Original and Unapproachable Mountain of Obesity.”

Joe was overwhelmed.

“Where’s Grandmother?” he asked, sud-

denly becoming aware that he had been left by his guardians.

“The poor child’s lost,” said the good-natured Fat Woman, changing her tone. “Here, you Two-headed Idiots, bring a chair for the child near me. I guess his grandmother will come after him. We’ll keep him until she does. Please pass him a slice of meat, Mademoiselle Columbine,” she continued, addressing the Circassian Girl.

“Sure I will, with a heart and half,” said that lady. “And will the dear child take sugar in his tea? Of course. Sure, he’s the very image of me own brother Mick, that cried so when I joined the museum. It’s me last year, though, wearing a wig, and being stared at!”

Joe soon felt quite at home. To the amusement of the Curiosities, he told them how he longed to be one of them.

The Circassian Lady gave him another slice of beef, cut thick, and said: “My dear child, do not mind work. Work will make you strong. Any honest work is good, provided it’s honest. This work isn’t honest so far as I’m concerned, for I deceive the public every day. The Feejee Boy thinks the same as I do.”

“I do,” said the Feejee Boy, solemnly, wiping his false beard with his napkin; “I do. It’s the hardest work I ever did. I’d rather be a hod-carrier than stand idle here day after day, and know I’m a fraud. It’s true, young fellow, as sure as my name is George Washington Robinson!”

“It’s a loafing, idle, useless life,” said the Fat Woman. “It is better, my boy, to eat dry bread and butter, without sugar, and work honestly for it, than to eat peanuts, or even roasted chestnuts, in idleness. *I* know.”

“*We* know!” cried all the Curiosities, except the Learned Pig, who seemed very well satisfied with his lot.

At this moment Joe heard Grandmother’s voice outside.

“Good-night! Thank you all!” he said, running out.

“Oh, Joe!” cried his Grandmother, “what a fright you gave us!”

It was quite dark. The light in the various hotels, and places of amusement shone like a great crown of rubies, diamonds, and emeralds against the sky. Joe uttered an exclamation of delight. Then he said, taking Grandmother’s hand on one side, and Aunt Lucy’s on the other:

“I don’t want to be a Living Curiosity. I’m going in for honest work. Grandmother, you or Aunt Lucy shall never want while *I* have my hands.”

Then they went and bought roasted sausages and rolls from a German woman at a little covered stand.





A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

I.

LITTLE Gretchen lived with her sister, Frau Julia, in a little Swiss village, high up in the mountains. If you have seen the trees—the very green, pointed ones—that are sold in the toy-shops with the “farm-yards” in boxes, you know what the trees around Frau Julia’s house were like. Frau Julia had children of her own, but they were two small babies; so Gretchen, who was an orphan, had no one to play with. Besides, Frau Julia’s babies were boys, and they did not care for dolls.

Frau Julia’s husband, who went often to town to buy silk for the lace he and his wife made, brought Gretchen several dolls. One of them, named Lilia, she loved very much; and, after she had helped Frau Julia to wash the

dishes, and the rosary had been said — the rosary was always said every night in Frau Julia's house — she used to sit in a corner of the kitchen and wash and dress Lilia.

Gretchen was not a Swiss child; she had been born in Alsace, which formerly belonged to France, but which now belongs to Germany. She spoke a little German, and more French.

One day a letter, postmarked "Milwaukee, U. S. of A.," came to Frau Julia's husband. It was from a brother of Frau Julia's, living in America. It said:

"DEAR JOSEF AND JULIA:

"I write to ask a favor, which I hope you will grant. You know that my wife is dead, and that I have no children. I am alone in the world. I am not poor; I have two fine farms here, and three houses in the city. Can you not — you who have two children of your own — let me have the little Gretchen?

"I send, by this steamer, a box of presents for yourselves and the boys, and a sum of money for Gretchen. I hope you will send her with anybody who may be coming over here. If nobody is coming, have her put in charge of the purser of the steamer, and telegraph to me the name of the steamer. You will find more than enough money in the box to pay for everything."

Frau Julia, after she had read this letter, cried, and said she could not part from Gretchen, who was quietly playing with Lilia in a corner. Josef shook his head, and said :

“ I love the little girl, too ; but she is too clever and bright to be kept here among peasants, who can do nothing but cut toys out of wood.”

Frau Julia fired up at this. “ Cut toys ! Your father did it. Our boys will do it. It’s good enough for Gretchen.”

“ No,” said Josef, smiling, “ our boys will, I hope, go with us over across the sea, before they are much older. Land is cheap there, and dear here. I will make farmers of them.”

Frau Julia shook her head. “ As you will, husband. But I could not let Gretchen go, unless I was sure of seeing her again.”

It was agreed that Josef should take Gretchen to the steamer, and put her in charge of the purser, who would land her in New York.

When Gretchen was told, she cried. Her sister found her pillow wet with tears in the morning ; and for a whole week the twin babies were in constant danger of catching cold, so often did Gretchen weep over them.

When the box from America was opened,

they found nice frocks for Gretchen and the babies, and gold chains for each, a huge paper of candy and popcorn, a lot of dress stuffs for Frau Julia, and some razors and a collection of cutlery for Josef. Last, but not least, was a pocket-book stuffed with notes, some for Gretchen, some for Josef.

The day of departure came. Poor Gretchen hugged Lilia to her breast. Lilia, whose hair had just been plaited for the tenth time that morning, seemed to smile out of her china blue eyes.

“At least,” sobbed Gretchen, “I have Lilia, I will never — never part from her. Never!”

II.

Josef had no difficulty in getting the purser of the steamer to promise to keep an eye on Gretchen. He found, too, a nice, motherly woman, from Zurich, who, with six children, were going to America. She promised, also, to look after her.

“Come to America soon, brother Josef,”

Gretchen said, as she sent her last kiss to the twins, "and I will say the rosary every night, as Julia bade me. And I will not lose my money. And I will tell ——" but the bell rang. Josef kissed the sad little face, and jumped ashore.

Josef and Julia had a sad night. Those left behind have always the worst of it.

Gretchen was amused by all the new things around her. The funny way that people slept in shelves against the side of the ship made her laugh. And she was pleased when a kind man lifted her and Lilia into their berth. Gretchen was charmed. The steamer seemed to rock like a cradle. Some of the passengers sang Swiss songs, and others cried while they were singing. Gretchen was asked to sing, and she began a little Alsatian song :

" Petite bergère qui chant toujours
Dans les champs fleuris,
A qui pense-tu tous les jours ?
Tra-la, tra-li ! "

But this made her cry, too, and she sang no more. Still she had Lilia. Lilia was so good to have ! She never answered back, or did anything naughty. She smiled all the time,

and no matter what anybody said, listened politely. When one of the little children from Zurich tried to gouge out one of her blue eyes with a pencil, she smiled on ! Gretchen, having rescued her, felt that such meekness under trial, was worthy of imitation.

The voyage across the ocean was pleasant and quick. Gretchen landed at Castle Garden with the rest of the emigrants. Her name was taken in that pen which has been wisely built, so that no new-comer can escape the vigilance of the authorities. She was patted on the head by kind officials and given over to a matron with a kind face, who told her that a letter from her step-brother in Milwaukee had been received, asking the people at the Garden to watch for a little girl with long blonde hair, plaited at the back. Gretchen was so astonished by the noise and the crowds that, until the kind matron had done speaking, she did not think of Lilia. Now, she did not understand a word of English, so she could only know that the matron was saying something nice, from the kind look in her face. The woman from Zurich and her flock had left for the West.

“ Lilia ! ” cried Gretchen.

“What?” asked the matron.

“Lilia, oh, my Lilia! Where can she be? I have lost her! I have lost her!”

“What’s the matter with the little child?” asked one of the officials. “Has she lost anybody!”

“Have you lost anybody!” asked the matron.

“Lilia! oh, Lilia! Where is she?” cried Gretchen, in German, wringing her hands.

“Have you lost your sister?” asked the matron.

“Lilia! Oh, where shall I find thee, thou dearest Lilia?”

“Poor thing!” said the matron. “We’ll find your sister, though I didn’t know there were two of you expected. Has anybody seen this little girl’s sister?”

Nobody had seen her.

In the meantime, Gretchen refused to be comforted. She ran about, looking in all the holes and corners. Where was Lilia?

“You won’t find your sister under people’s feet,” said the matron; “there’s no use looking on the floor for her. What a queer child! I hope she isn’t crazy.”

Poor Gretchen still wept so piteously that

everybody became interested and touched by her distress.

“Lilia was all I had! Ah! she was so good—*so lieblich!*” she said to a newspaper reporter, who could understand German.

“You’ll find her, little girl,” he said; “the whole place is in a bustle looking for her. She can tell her name, you know.”

“But she can’t speak,” said Gretchen, amazed at his stupidity, “She wasn’t one of those that speak. She couldn’t open her eyes either. But she was so *schön!*”

The reporter was touched. “Dumb and blind!” he exclaimed to the matron. “Poor, poor child! We *must* find her!” And he wrote a long article in his paper, in which he described “Lilia, the Lost Child” in the most pathetic language. Another day passed. Still Gretchen lamented. The purser of the steamer said there had been no dumb and blind child on board. But so intense was the interest in Gretchen’s story, that nobody believed him. A telegram came from her step-brother, saying he would reach New York the following day.

How could Gretchen go away without Lilia? Oh, dear, dear! More tears! Suddenly, in her desperation, she thought of the dear St.

Anthony of Padua, who always finds lost things for people when they ask him.

“Dear St. Anthony,” she said, “please find Lilia.”

After which, she went to her box to find a collar. She couldn't get one at first, because it was beneath a pile of clothes. She fumbled in the box, and at the very bottom found Lilia, unharmed. She remembered then that she had put her treasure there on the day before the steamer landed !

The matron had tears in her eyes. There was a group of anxious-looking people around her.

“It's a strange mystery,” the policeman said ; “strange, very strange !”

“To think of that poor, deaf, dumb child alone in this big, wicked city. Poor little orphan !” cried the matron, wiping her eyes.

Suddenly Gretchen burst into the room.

“I have found her !” she cried, joyously.

“Who? when?” was the chorus.

“In my box !”

“Poor child !” said a kind-hearted Irish girl, just landed. “She has gone crazy. Sure, it's myself that knows what it is to loose a sister. And she deaf and dumb too !”

“‘In my box!’” translated the German clerk. In her box! How could she find her sister in a box?

Gretchen held up Lilia and kissed her over and over again.

“The good St. Anthony found her.”

“*A doll*,” cried the matron.

“A doll,” cried the policeman.

“Only a doll,” groaned the reporter.

“She had no sister!” cried the Irish girl.

“The deceiving little creature.”

“A DOLL!” exclaimed everybody in amazement.

“And this is Gretchen!” cried a pleasant voice, as a big, brown man caught her in his arms.

“And this is Lilia, too,” answered Gretchen, “thanks to the good St. Anthony!”

Gretchen and Lilia are very happy on a farm near Milwaukee. Lilia has lost an arm, but she has herself not been lost since that awful time.





AT SCHOOL AGAIN.

THE first school weeks are over, and the plunge back into the routine of school-work has not been so bad as it looked, has it? It was pretty hard to get into the old school-room again and bend over books, with visions of the delights of vacation times dancing before your eyes. It used to be hard in my time—very hard.

They tell me the new-fashioned school-rooms are very neat and trim, with all kinds of modern improvements, and smooth, varnished desks.

When I was young, in an old school-house by the Delaware, we had not any of these things, nor any of the bright school-books, full of pictures, Mr. O'Shea sends out every year. I remember the "History of Jack Hal-yard" was our reading-book; there were one or two wood-cuts in it of women and little

girls in very short-waisted gowns, and little boys in wide collars and tall hats. I have forgotten what it was all about now; indeed, I forget whether the hero's name was Halyard or Halifax, but one of the leading incidents turned on the amazement of two little Jersey boys who saw a gilt-framed mirror for the first time, and who thought the frame was pure gold!

How rough and brown were the desks in that old school! There was a name that had been cut in 1848; and on the side of our desk, farthest from the teachers, a fellow had tried to cut "*E pluribus unum*," but had got only as far as "*E plur*" when the rattan descended, and he wept. Wood-carving was not encouraged in those days! Dear, dear! I don't think I could go to a school where the desks are new. I should be constantly asking "Where are the friends of my youth?" and looking for "J. McGinniss, 1848," and for "*E plur*."

We had Miss Edgeworth's "Parents' Assistant," and the tales of the dear, delightful Canon Schmid. Ah, those Sunday afternoons, when catechism was over, and supper wasn't ready! How we followed Miss Edgeworth's little Italian, and learned from her never to throw a piece of string away, or to cut a cord

that could be untied ! And the grand people in Canon Schmid's stories ! I have never grown tired of them, and I hope I never will, until I meet the dear old Canon in Heaven.

Ah, my dear children, be cheerful and content. Do your best in the present, and do not spoil it by wishing to be old. You may make up your mind to this : you will never be quite happy in this world. These October days will never come back again ; and in the time to come, although you may have gained gold, you will look to the gold of these youthful days—the gold of the mellow sunlight and yellow leaves—with regret.

To-day, most of you have your fathers and mothers with you. What joy can equal that in the future ? Perhaps you do not think much of it now ; but a time will come when you will think much of it. The coming days may bring you the fine things you dream of, but it cannot make the beloved faces younger, or bring them back to you after they have gone.

There is an important thing you often forget—yes, you, John, Patrick, George, or whoever may be reading this. The important thing is, that you are getting ready for life. All this going to school is only a making ready. First

of all, you say your prayers, learn your catechism lessons, and attend to your religious duties, to know, serve, and love God in this world, and to be happy with him forever in the next. In order to do your part well in this world, you must fit yourself for work. You must make and keep yourself healthy. The bigger your lungs are, the stronger your muscles are, the more you will be able to endure in the race of life. Play hard, then. Don't mind a scratch or two. Don't be idle. Run, walk, play ball, keep out in the open air, and have a good time whenever your parents have nothing for you to do.

Don't play when you ought to work, and don't fail to help mother when there's a chance. What is more disgusting than to see a boy standing with his hands in his pockets whistling, while his mother almost faints under a huge market-basket? or strains herself carrying a bucket of water from the pump? Boys who can see their mothers work like slaves, while they stay idle, never come to good.

You must remember that you are getting ready to earn your own living, and that reading, writing, and arithmetic will help you to do that. And, while you are learning geography,

do not forget to learn the geography of the place where you live. Learn the streets, the names of the business firms in them, so that you could make a map, if called on. There was a boy, the other day, who wanted a place very much. His mother was a widow. He answered an advertisement. His hand-writing suited the advertiser. He seemed "bright," and the advertiser had almost concluded to take him, so he asked :

"Do you know geography?"

"Oh, yes," said the boy, proudly. "I studied it four years in the B—— St. Public School."

"Can you 'bound' Alaska, and tell me how high the Himalaya Mountains are?"

"Of course, sir. That's easy."

"But I have no business with Alaska or India; I have a great deal with the firms down town, here in New York. Now, how can you get to East Broadway? Where's the Chemical Bank? Where's Pearl Street?"

The boy hesitated. "I guess I could find them, sir. I don't know where they are, though."

The man shook his head. He did not want that boy.



IN POVERTY HOLLOW.

IT was not Tim Murphy's own idea, I am bound to admit. He had read of it somewhere ; but, as he made good use of it, I think he deserves credit. At any rate, he had all he wanted out of it.

Tim Murphy lived in Poverty Hollow. Poverty Hollow was a small settlement in Carbon County, Pennsylvania. A few refugees had settled there during the war. They were very poor—they had come up from South Carolina with only the clothes they had on. As they were so very poor, the settlement took its name from them. After a time, a coal mine was found near, and a great colony of Irishmen and their families settled there. Plenty of money was made now, but the place still kept its name. The coal mine gave out. Oil appeared farther up the country, and Poverty Hollow was drained of most of its inhabitants.

Some stayed. They were mostly Catholics. Two of the South Carolinian families remained there ; they had become Catholics too, through the instrumentality of Father Byrnes, who died just as Poverty Hollow began to lose its people. After his death, a priest came every month to say Mass. One Sunday Father Mooney preached on the necessity of reading Catholic books.

“You ought to be able to defend your faith,” he said. “I am sure you would blush for me, if you saw me stand silent, ignorant, and ashamed, when an unbeliever would tell lies about the Church. Now I blush sometimes when I see how ignorant Catholic boys—so bright in other things—are concerning their religion. ‘Everybody reads the story-papers,’ you say. That is all the more reason why you shouldn’t read them. You must set ‘everybody’ an example, because God has given you the gift of faith. Read, all of you ; read good books.”

There was no Catholic book-store in Poverty Hollow. There were not three Catholic books, except prayer-books, in the place. On the same Sunday afternoon, Father Mooney gave his usual monthly instruction to the boys and

girls. After the serious part of his discourse was over, he told them a short version of "Fabiola." The children were intensely interested. He told them he wished he had more time, to give them the whole story, but that they might find it in a book written by Cardinal Wiseman.

Tim went home and dreamed about Pancratius and Corvinus. His cheeks glowed as he thought of the sufferings of the early Christians. Oh, if he only had the book! But the book was not to be found in Poverty Hollow.

Down by the big pond, where the frogs held their concerts at night, the boys of Poverty Hollow used to gather. They sang songs, danced, told one another the impossible adventures of the story-papers, and swore a good deal.

Father Mooney saw that a great deal of evil was caused by these meetings; but he saw no way of breaking them up, for the boys had nothing to do at home. He would have liked to open a library and reading-room, but the three missions he served were poor, and he could not ask the people for money for what they would have considered luxuries.

Consequently the boys and girls were rather

rough, and certainly very ignorant of their religion. Some of them knew their catechism tolerably well; others vaguely remembered it. On the Sundays when Father Mooney did not come to Poverty Hollow, they played cards in shady places in the fields and spent what money they had in smoking and drinking. They were idle and listless, with no idea of anything beyond the dime novels and foolish stories they found over the river.

On the next Sunday that Father Mooney came to Poverty Hollow, the boys and girls of his class demanded a story. Father Mooney told them this story in verse :

“ Doña Inez was a lady,
Very rich and fair to see,
And her heart was like a lily
In its holy purity;
Through the widest street in Cadiz,
Doña Inez went one day,
Clad in costly silks and laces,
With a group of friends as gay.

“ Near the portals of a convent —
From the Moors just lately won —
Sat a crowd of dark-skinned beggars,
Basking in the pleasant sun,
One an old man — he a Christian —
Blind to all the outward light —
Told his black beads, praying softly
For all poor souls still in night.

“ ‘I am but a Moorish beggar,’
Said a woman with a child;
‘I am but a Moorish beggar,
And the Moors are fierce and wild;
You may talk of Christian goodness —
Christian Faith and Charity;
But *I’ll* never be a Christian,
Till some proof of these I see.
Christians are as proud and haughty
As the proudest Moor of all,
And they hate the men that hate them
With a hate like bitter gall.’

“ ‘You judge rashly, O my sister,
In the words you speak to me.’
‘I would be a Christian, blind man, —
Show me Christian charity!’

“ ‘Lo! here comes proud Doña Inez,
Very rich and fair to see;
I am but a Moorish beggar,
Will the lady come to me?
No! she will not, for she hateth
All the children of the Moor;
If she come, I tell you, blind man,
I will kneel and Christ adore!

“ Passing was the Lady Inez
When the dark group met her eye,
And she leaned from out her litter
Smiling on them tenderly.
‘They are poor; they are God’s children,’
Said a voice within her soul,
And she lightly from her litter
Stepped to give the beggars dole.

“Sneered, and laughed, and laughing, wondered
All the other ladies gay;
And the Lady Inez knew not
She had saved a soul that day!”

After that Father Mooney told them how beautifully God had formed the snow crystal, and how the singular and wonderful forms of created things were shown by means of the microscope. The pupils listened breathlessly as he described the phosphorescent light on the sea at night. “The works of God are marvellous,” he said. “The more we know about them, the greater our love for Him ought to become.” Father Mooney told them other strange stories. He said they might all be found in a book called “Familiar Science.”

Tim Murphy, in his Sunday jacket, which was blue with brass buttons on it, walked home with Seth Gudgron. Seth Gudgron was one of the boys whose fathers had come from South Carolina. He was tall and thin, with light hair and eyebrows.

“I wish the priest would teach us every day. The stories he tells helps a fellow to remember the catechism. I wish I had that ’ere book about the snow. I’d read it in the evenings, and make mam and dad open their eyes!”

“Oh, dear!” said Tim. “I wish I had both that book and that about Pancratius. I’ve got a dollar and ten cents saved up. I wonder if that would buy both in the city.”

“Guess not,” said Seth, thrusting out his long wrist about half a foot beyond the sleeve of his coat, to throw a stone at a frog. “But I do want that ‘Familiar Science.’ I never cared much for books before. Who’d think that a fly was almost as big as a frog under the—the miko——”

“Microscope,” said Tim.

Tim’s father was the butcher of Poverty Hollow. He never had time to read, and he burned all the story-papers that Tim brought home. Tim’s mother could not read; but, above all things, she liked to have Tim read her prayer-book to her at night.

“I say, Seth, have you any money?”

“Yes,” drawled Seth, “I’ve got two dollars,—that is, dad’s got them. Mr. Burke paid me for helping him with the hay.”

Tim’s countenance fell. It was well known that Seth’s father was a drunkard. The two dollars were probably spent long ago.

“I thought,” Tim said, “of a plan I’ve read about somewhere. If you bought ‘Familiar

Science,' I'd buy 'Fabiola,' and we could read both."

Seth's eyes sparkled. "That would be nice."

Just then Katie Murphy and her brother Dan joined them.

"Wasn't the catechism class lovely to-day?" she said. "Oh, dear! I wish I could read some of the books Father Mooney talks about. Cousin Grace sent me a very exciting book, 'Alice; or The Escaped Nun.' But it was a bad book, and mother tore it up. I've nothing to read except the old school-books, and Father Mooney forbids us to read the story-papers."

Seth and Tim looked guilty.

Dan, who was a very small boy, cried out—

"I can't read, and I don't want to. Reading makes you bow-legged."

Seth punched Dan, because this remark seemed personal. Katie interfered; and, after a time, peace was restored.

"Have you any money, Katie?"

"Fifty cents," said Katie, proudly. "If I had enough, I'd buy 'Felix Kent.' It must be a lovely story, if it's anything like what Father Mooney told us; and I'd like to buy 'Fabiola,' too. Oh, wasn't that *lovely* about the blind girl, Cæcilia?"

"I have a plan," said Tim. "We can get the books."

"When Christmas comes on the Fourth of July," said Seth.

"No; next week. We'll put our money together, and send it to New York, and ask the bookseller to send us the three books."

"No sir—ee," said Seth. "You don't get me to put in two dollars against your dollar-and-ten and Katie's fifty. I'm not so green."

Tim reflected. "I guess you're right. We byos will each put in a dollar, and let Katie put in her fifty cents, because she's a girl."

Katie looked at Seth, anxiously.

"All right," he said; "but I am to read her book as soon as she gets done with it."

"Very well; and we'll send the money off to-morrow."

"I'll run home now and tell dad about the microscope. That'll put him in a good humor, and he'll give me the dollar."

Katie tripped home lightly, dragging the obstinate Dan after her. She was to read those *lovely* books. She was very happy. Her mother, being told that Father Mooney had recommended the books, made no objection, though she said she thought the money

might be spent to better advantage than in buying "fables."

Seth's father, having not yet spent all his wages—he was a carpenter, and a good man when he was sober—gave the boy his dollar. Tim's father, who was always anxious to please his son, added fifty cents to the fund; so three dollars were sent to New York. Back there came, neatly packed, a big edition of "Fabiola," with pictures; "Familiar Science;" "Felix Kent," and the prettiest book the children had ever seen—"The Shamrock Gone West," besides "Cottage Conversations." These last had been added, because the children—Tim wrote the note—had explained their plan to the publisher.

The children were in Tim Murphy's house—Katie was no relation of Tim's—when the box arrived.

Mr. Murphy watched their faces when it was opened.

"Sure," he whispered to his wife, "It's worth ten dollars to see them now."

And it was! Such pleasure, when "Fabiola" was pulled out! And then the cry of admiration when "The Shamrock Gone West," with its bunch of gold primroses on the dark green cover, came to light, was delightful!

It happened—it was on Saturday afternoon when the box came, and there was no school—that Dick Blake, whose father was the richest man in Poverty Hollow, but who never went to Church, was there. He seized “Fabiola” at once.

“This is just what I wanted to find,” he said, turning to page nine and reading Pancratius’ story of his quarrel with Corvinus.

“Yes,” he read, “and was the cause of my delay. For when we went forth from school into the field, he addressed me insultingly in the presence of our companions, and said, ‘Come, Pancratius, this is, I understand, the last time we meet *here* (he laid a particular emphasis on the word); but I have a long score to demand payment of from you——’”

“No you don’t!” said Seth, closing the book. “You can’t read that book unless you buy one, too. Wasn’t that the rule you laid down, Tim?”

“Yes,” said Tim. “It looks mean, I know, but we want to read all the good books we can, and every fellow that comes in must bring in a good book.”

Dick’s face brightened. “All right! Just let me see what Corvinus did to Pancratius,

and I'll bring over 'The Red-headed Detective ; or, Old Slenth Still on the Trail !' It's boss !"

"No, no !" said Katie. "Father Mooney wouldn't let us read it. Our books must be all *good*."

Dick, after a slight grumble, went out.

Tim sat down to read "Fabiola," after his chores were done. Katie took home "Felix Kent," and Seth rushed home with "Familiar Science." The other books were left in Tim's keeping.

For the first time in many years, Seth Gudgron's father stayed at home that night, while the boy read aloud explanation after explanation of the things around him. Some experiments were tried. Seth's father learned with amazement of all these new wonders. His mother silently thanked God.

Katie read aloud the first chapters of "Fabiola" to three girls, who stayed at home with her, instead of roaming about Poverty Hollow in the dark.

On the next Monday, Dick Blake brought the money to buy "The Lion of Flanders," which Father Mooney had recommended. Two girls, friends of Katie, added a dollar each, and two other good books were bought.

Dick Blake's father dipped into "Fabiola" one night, and became so interested that he stayed up reading it until two o'clock.

"Mary," he said to his wife, "I think I'll try to be a better Catholic. Surely, what the early Christians were willing to die for, is worth living for."

"Thank God!" said Mrs. Blake.

Tim Murphy was happy. As soon as Father Mooney recommended a new book, it was added to the library. In less than two months there were twenty-five books in circulation, and a change was perceptible in the contributors—a change which Father Mooney was delighted to see. Tim felt that his plan had succeeded.







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